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ABSTRACT

This country note analyzes main issues concerning adult learning and policy responses in Finland. Section 2 describes the political, economic, and social context in which adult learning fits. Sections 3-6 follow these four themes impinging on adult participation in learning: inadequate incentives and motivations; complex pathways between learning settings and lack of transparency in signaling learning outcomes across formal and nonformal settings; inappropriate teaching and learning methods; and lack of coordination between public policies that affect lifelong learning. Section 3 describes government and social partners' actions to improve motivation and incentives, including an education and training insurance program to guarantee financial aid to adults, and incentives for aging adults and special groups. Section 4 focuses on how integrated the institutions' approach to provision and participation is, including a second chance for adults; serving atypical clients; openness to change; building individual pathways; and guidance and counseling services. Section 5 deals with improving quality, pedagogy, and variety of learning provisions, such as eLearning, learning at work, guidance services, and teacher training. Section 6 considers what is being done to ensure policy coherence and effectiveness, including an holistic approach; policy to cater to those most in need; the role of social partners; shared funding and responsibilities; open universities; and pension schemes. Section 7 summarizes strengths, weaknesses, and challenges and makes recommendations for improvement. (Contains 23 references.) (YLB)

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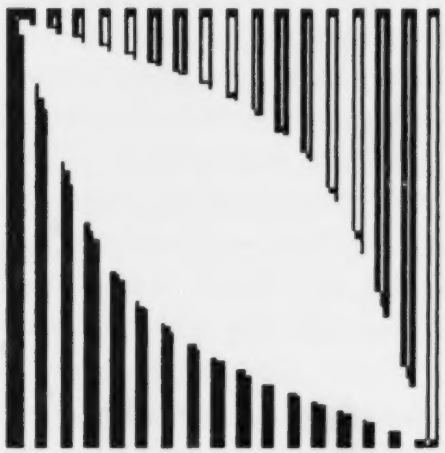
THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING



FINLAND

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives and organisation of the thematic review

When they met in January 1996, OECD Education Ministers argued that far-reaching changes were needed to make lifelong learning for all a reality. "Strategies for lifelong learning need a wholehearted commitment to new system-wide goals, standards and approaches, adapted to the culture and circumstance of each country". Recognising that adults encountered particular problems in participating in lifelong learning, Ministers called on the OECD to "review and explore new forms of teaching and learning appropriate for adults, whether employed, unemployed or retired". In October 1997, OECD Labour Ministers amplified the message. They recognised the adverse labour market consequences that arise due to the lack of access to lifelong learning opportunities, and "underlined the importance of ensuring that lifelong learning opportunities are broadly accessible to all persons of working age, in order to sustain and increase their employability".

In 1998, the OECD and the U.S. Department of Education co-organised an international conference, *How Adults Learn*, to review recent research results and practices with regard to teaching and learning adapted to the needs of adults (OECD and US Department of Education, 1999). One of the conclusions from the conference was that a cross-country thematic review could be a valuable tool for understanding the role of policy and institutional environment in promoting adult learning and drawing policy lessons from different national experiences. In late 1998, the OECD Education Committee launched the Thematic Review on Adult Learning as a joint activity with the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee.

The purpose of the activity is to analyse adult learning policy options under different contexts. It reviews the adequacy of learning opportunities, how to improve access and participation in adult learning and how learning interacts with the labour market. Among the different issues object of analysis are: the patterns of participation in adult learning; diagnoses of the problems that arise because of these patterns; policy programmes and institutional arrangements that have been used by OECD member countries to expand learning opportunities for adults; options that can be regarded as "good practices" under diverse institutional circumstances and how these can be applied more widely within and across countries.

A meeting of national representatives to discuss the terms of reference and indicate interest in participation took place in Paris in June 1999. As a result, ten countries are participating in the Review: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. A team of three reviewers, which comprises a rapporteur, from different countries and backgrounds (such as pedagogy, education, economics or social sciences) and two members of the OECD Secretariat visit each country. Each visit lasts about ten days and allows reviewers to capture both education and labour market issues. Each country prepares a Background Report drafted according to guidelines agreed by country representatives and the OECD Secretariat.

The visit enables the reviewers to analyse adult learning in the country on the basis of the Background Report, discussions with representatives of government, administration, employers, trade unions and practitioners, and through site visits. After each visit, the rapporteur, with the help of the review team, prepares a Country Note analysing the main issues concerning adult learning and policy responses in the country under review. The note addresses the four major themes that impinge on participation by adults in learning: inadequate incentives and motivations for adults to learn; complex pathways between learning settings and a lack of transparency in signalling learning outcomes across a variety of formal and non-formal settings; inappropriate teaching and learning methods; and lack of co-ordination between various

public policies that directly or indirectly affect lifelong learning. A final Comparative Report will address the different issues and policy responses in a comparative perspective, including the insights gathered from the participating countries

1.2 Finland's participation in the review

The review visit in Finland took place on 1-9 February 2001. The members of the Finnish Steering Group, the authors of the Background Report and the members of the review team can be found in the Annexes 1 and 2 to this document. Annex 3 includes the programme of the visit and participants. The review team would like to thank the Steering Group, the authors of the Background Report and the persons who during the visit were able to give some information on the specificity and the success factors concerning adult learning in Finland.

The review team was impressed by the provision and quality of adult education in Finland. One of the most remarkable features of the visit was the positive attitude of people in general towards learning, and the overwhelming conviction about its true value. Because participation already rates highest in the OECD, there may be a tendency to "rest on one's laurels" and not to think about what to improve for whom. There is such an overall enthusiasm about learning that those active in the field tend to forget that there is quite a sizeable minority that do not share this zeal for learning and are unaware of their learning needs (see Section 2.7).

1.3 Structure of the paper

The Review opens with a description of the general political, economic and social context into which adult learning fits in Finland (Section 2). The layout of the main body of the Country Note (Sections 3-6) follows the four thematic areas specified by the OECD. Each section highlights features and initiatives presented and discussed with experts in the field — administrators, practitioners, researchers, social partners. Section 4 focuses in particular on institutions visited and Section 5 with innovative aspects of the systems. Conclusions and recommendations are drawn in Section 7.

2. GENERAL CONTEXT

2.1 From deep recession to high tech boom

Finland experienced a deep recession in the early 1990s. In terms of gross national income the recession was at its lowest ebb in 1993 while 1994 was the worst year in respect of employment rate. Since then growth has been steady, apart from a slight slowdown in 1999 (OECD, 2000*b*). This recession left a profound effect on the Finnish population and one of the ways in which this manifests itself is in their eagerness to attend courses and further their learning. Finland emerged from this experience very quickly and with a very healthy economy. One of the big factors behind this performance was the exceptional growth in the ICT sector. Prior to the recession, Finland had developed very quickly from being a country in which in the 1960s most people still lived in rural areas to become an important manufacturing nation, and now with a strong service economy. Since then the picture in Finland has changed radically, with electronic and optical equipment almost catching-up with wood, pulp and paper for the main share of

exports, both shares equalling just under 30% in 1999 (OECD, 2000*b*). The growth of Nokia[1] had a big role to play in this structural change. Between 1994 and 1999 its output grew by 25% per annum. Today Nokia, including its subsidiaries, accounts for 4% of GDP, 25% of exports and one-third of private sector R&D in Finland (OECD, 2000*b*). This success has attracted many subsidiaries of large international ICT companies to Finland. These are mainly concentrated in the southern and particularly the Southwest region.

2.2 Regional asymmetries

These developments have not been mirrored throughout Finland leaving a rather large imbalance between the regions, as no State authority exists which might influence their growth and development. Particularly in the northern and eastern regions, economic development is centred around natural resources and amenities such as the environment. Such activities have difficulties competing with the lure of the more high tech industries in the south and Finland has a significant problem of rural-urban migration and brain drain from north to south.

2.3 Political change and institutional reorganisation

In 1987, the conservatives returned to power in Finland after many years of absence from government. Against the background of global change and economic and technical development, they quickly implemented significant changes in education policy in the decade that followed, with support by the opposition. The political power of the Ministry of Education was strengthened and that of the National Board of Education was reduced to a narrower function, mainly in evaluation (Rinne and Vanttaja, 2000). Decentralisation took place in 1997 when some existing authorities were united and some new ones set up, including the six Provincial State Offices. There are two others in particular which are of interest here, the Regional Administration of the municipalities, divided into 20 Regional Councils, and the 15 Employment and Business Development Centres (TE Centres), which are steered by the Ministries of Trade and Industry, Labour and Agriculture and Forestry and hence incorporate the functions of the labour market organisations. In accordance with municipal autonomy, Regional Councils are statutory joint municipal authorities operating according to the principles of local self-government. The Councils operate as regional planning and development authorities and are, thus, the units in charge of regional planning, looking after regional interests. On the basis of municipal democracy, they articulate common regional needs and work towards promoting the material and cultural well-being of their regions. Besides their statutory responsibilities, they act as centres of development for the regions, pursue the interests of the region, its municipalities, inhabitants, and businesses and carry out research, planning, and analyses. The Regional Council is also the organisation for co-operation between the various sectors within the region. Since 1999, Finland has a "rainbow" coalition government consisting of social democrats, the centre-right parties, the Green League, the Left Alliance and the Swedish People's Party. It is still too early to pinpoint any major shift in policy by this Government, which seems to prioritise taking forward the reforms of the 1990s.

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1. Nokia is the dominant company in the Finnish ICT sector. At the end of 1999, it was Europe's largest company by market capitalisation. Almost half of Nokia's global output still takes place in Finland. Domestic sales, however, account for only 3% of Nokia's total sales, thus it has been important in boosting Finnish exports. It has an estimated 300 first-tier subcontractors, employing 14 000 persons, while the estimated total number of Finnish firms in the ICT sector is around 3 000 (OECD, 2000b).

2.4 Market economy but with a well developed welfare State

The social structures and facilities are well developed in Finland. In addition to matters such as police, transport, consumer, competition, food and judiciary affairs, the Provincial State Offices are responsible for social, health, youth, cultural and educational administration. Income tax in Finland, though not as high as in neighbouring Scandinavian countries, is above the EU average and in return the citizens expect and get good service. The state provides well for its citizens from birth to old age. Although pre-school education is still in development, child-care facilities are widely available and in a high percentage of households both parents are working. Similarly, care for the elderly is well developed. The problem of an ageing society and an ageing workforce is very acute in Finland. Now with the baby boomer generation soon reaching retirement age, the repercussions on society and the economy could be enormous. In 1981, a multidisciplinary research programme was started to study ageing and work. FinnAge - Respect for Ageing was an action programme to promote health, work ability and well-being of ageing workers in 1990-96. As a follow-up, the national programme for the ageing — Experience is a National Treasure, 1998-2002 — was launched to put some of the recommendations into practice. In addition, the national strategy 2000-2004 stresses information society skills for all (Ministry of Education, 1999).

2.5 Adult education: history and current state

General interest or liberal adult education has a history going back to the 19th Century. Now it is attended by 20% of the population annually. This compares with 43% of the workforce who participate in job-related education in 1995, circa 40% of which was self-motivated rather then employer determined (Ministry of Education, 1998). Workers' institutes took hold in Finland, unlike Sweden where the idea originated. Traditionally, therefore, there has been a strong emphasis on the educational needs of workers. This is still in evidence today in the weight given to adult vocational education. Perhaps the most striking feature of adult learning today is the regulated market, heavily subsidised by the State and regional administrations. There is a marked absence of a thriving commercial provision that characterises learning opportunities for adults in many other OECD countries.

2.6 The 1990s: expansion and a new approach to regulation of education

The 1990s was a decade of reform. Major changes were introduced affecting all aspects of youth and adult provision. The changes were motivated by the need for: a more modern and flexible system; upgrading of the educational institutions and the level of education provided; decentralisation of administrative and executive powers; a more market-oriented approach, allowing for more competition; more autonomy for providers as to how they arrange education, but at the same time, extended control by the State through a funding per-graduate mechanism or eventually the new competence-based examination schemes which are still being assessed. The creation of the polytechnics or AMK institutes came as a timely contribution to economic revival following the recession, offering technology and engineering degrees which was just the kind of qualification needed by the emerging ICT sector. Universities still offer longer, more academic, courses. Many university students take much longer than the required course time to complete their studies. The polytechnics more effectively provide shorter degrees, well grounded in professional life. However, students from all tertiary sectors are being lured away prematurely by opportunities on the labour market.

The State has a big influence since it is a major stakeholder financially. A number of schools provide services specifically for adults: the adult education centres; the adult vocational education centres; specialised vocational institutions; liberal education institutes; some private schools; professional

continuing education at universities and polytechnics; open-university courses and distance learning opportunities.

Adults are entitled to acquire the same educational and vocational qualifications as the young. In circumstances where the need arises, young and older students learn together, *e.g.* within the minority Swedish community or in sparsely populated areas. In effect, intergenerational learning is becoming more the norm throughout adult education outlets. The most widespread occurrence is in open university programmes which, although originally foreseen for adults, are increasingly being used as a side-door entrance into university by young, first-time entrants, who failed to matriculate.

2.7 Lifelong learning: a reality for many Finns

Participation in learning of 25-64 year-olds Finns is highest in the OECD (see Table 1). Statistics Finland's latest adult education survey confirms that a good one third of the age group from 25 to 64 (37%) did not participate in any education and training (including long-term self-motivated studies) annually. 45% of the adult population did not avail of the education offer (or education type) targeted at adults annually. Approximately 6% of the population have never received adult education. In spring 2000, one third of the age group from 25–64 (34%), reported that, currently, there was no need for education or training in their work or free-time pursuits. The diverse offer of learning providers (Table 5) and widespread use of computers in libraries and homes facilitate the independent utilisation of computer and Internet-based learning environments allowing many Finns to adopt a routine of lifelong learning. However, the system is geared very much in favour of those who want to learn, with little or no activity in evidence which is specifically aimed at those who are less motivated. This is partly due to the State's strong emphasis on self-motivation and each individual's freedom to choose (one learning path is defined within policy as "self-directed learning", see Heinonen, 2001), and partly on the strong conviction that mainstreaming is the best course of action. The latter limits space for special initiatives targeted at particular groups of the population.

Adequate support services for adults who wish to participate in learning are on the whole in place. A good service provides for pre-school care and caring services for the sick and elderly. Therefore, adults are as a rule free to attend courses. However, many of the liberal education courses are organised during the day, which could be seen as giving them a "women's interest" label, as it is usually non-employed women who are free at this time to attend. It may also account for the high female participation in this type of education, although high participation by women is not confined to liberal studies (see Chapter 4, Statistics Finland, 1999*a*).

2.8 Shrinking public spending

Finland is currently the fourth highest spender among OECD countries in terms of the amount of GDP expenditure on education, following Sweden, Norway and Denmark (OECD, 2000*a*). Nevertheless, Table 4 of the Background Report is very revealing on the pattern of investment in adult education (Heinonen, 2001). It shows that investment in many areas of adult education has been reduced in real terms since 1997. The biggest reduction in nominal terms between 1997 and 2001 (over 60%) is in funding of additional vocational training provided by educational institutions.

In 2001 the government is investing FIM 500 million to provide State-sponsored pre-school education for six-year olds. This is symptomatic of the competition among sectors of education for the relative static state budget, at a time when costs are rising and concurrently there is greater demand for financing in an effort to provide learning for all. These shifts in emphasis on the part of the government are surely well founded, but they sometimes come as a surprise to other partners involved. Currently, there is a

growing feeling of instability about future public spending on education and training, because there is a lack of debate on alternative ways to raise the finance which is still needed in adult education and training, such as indirect public funding and shared investment. But when the chips are down, perhaps the state will continue to assure the financing of foundation learning for all, other players will have to participate more in funding adult education and training, at least for those groups not at risk.

3. WHAT ARE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL PARTNERS DOING TO IMPROVE MOTIVATION AND INCENTIVES?

3.1 Understanding the motives of those who participate in adult education

A big incentive to learn in Finland is provided by the amount of free provision available. The cost of study is paid by the State for everyone. Much adult education is free, even at recreational level. Customers, often employers, purchase a great deal of education and training from vocational adult education centres (VAEC), but the price can be highly subsidised. Additional vocational training is often provided by VAECs and most of the costs are covered by the state. The Ministry of Education funds adult continuing vocational education leading to a vocational qualification. In addition to the State subsidies available to institutions, direct financing to adults is available in the form of adult study aid, and the training and severance fund. Initial vocational education for adults is publicly funded as for youth. A special quota for participation was introduced in the early 1990s, and in 1996 this amounted to 26 000 adults or 13% of the total participation in initial vocational education.

Finns have different reasons for learning. Indeed, even within a single individual there may be a complex combination of reasons for wanting to learn. But the average Finn seems to have an inherent interest in learning that is not dependent on much extrinsic or explicit incentive. A number of factors may contribute to this:

- Weather - long winter evenings conducive to study.
- Working time arrangements that suit attendance.
- Protestant ethic emphasising each individual's duty to develop his/her potential.
- Companies are encouraging employees to gain qualifications.
- Labour market demands for higher qualifications.

Finns have traditionally seen learning as a form of upward mobility and betterment of their situation. Life has always been difficult due to war, emigration, the remoteness of some regions and their harsh climate, and generally learning to cope with ups and downs of life was common. Learning was seen as a guarantee of improvement in a developing economy, and as the economy and society progressed very quickly from being a primary-based to a tertiary sector economy, such motivations are still very strong. Consequently, Finland enjoys high levels of literacy (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000).

Another reason for learning is the flexibility it gives both the individual and employer. Learning offers mobility options with qualifications as a better guarantee of alternative opportunities. Employers regard qualifications highly, notably those attained through the competence-based qualification system. Any job-related learning undertaken by employees is an added bonus to employers and their undertakings in terms of increased skills and human capital performance. In a recession as deep as that of the early 1990s, certificates and degrees in all fields lose value simply because the economy as a whole contracts so severely. The reality of this was brought home to people during the recession when all levels had to queue

up for jobs. Indeed, given the high number of university-level unemployed, the Relander programme was launched in the early 1990s to provide continuing professional education for unemployed academics, those under threat of unemployment and people coming from outside the labour market. The number of students participating in adult education rose to reflect education commissioned by the labour administration, and an increase in open university education under the Relander programme was particularly obvious (Ministry of Education, 1998). Keeping skills and competence renewed and upgraded is, therefore, essential for the entire workforce. As the number of people gaining qualifications increases, higher-level degrees are increasing in value by comparison to lower-level degrees. As a result of technological change and innovation, certificates and degrees in certain fields (more technical and practical, math, science, business, health, etc.) are increasing in value by comparison to certificates and degrees in other fields (less technical and practical, liberal arts, arts, humanities, etc.). Suikkanen (2001) points out that the "threshold for employment seems to have risen to a minimum of at least one diploma of more than three years. and unless the individual's choices are supported by socio-political means, s/he is often forced to take a loan, save, gain assistance from others, etc. in order to achieve a second or a higher qualification".

Finland is becoming an example of the changing workforce depicted in the OECD *Jobs Study* report, characterised by multiple job changes throughout working life (OECD, 1994). The structure of working life changed in the 1990s with a big increase in the number of fixed-term contracts in certain sectors. According to Statistics Finland's statistics on working conditions and the labour market in 1984, 11% of the wage and salary earners had employment contracts for a determined period of time. In 1990, the corresponding figure was 15% and in 1997, 18%. This provides a good reason to learn in order to be ready to progress to one's next job. People are also studying to help them attain a permanent job. Between 1980 and 1995 the number of participants in adult education increased from 600 000 to 1.6 million. Rinne and Vanttaja (2000) attribute this increase mainly to rising active participation in vocational education. They feel that present policy expects adults to respond to globalisation and technical change, and automatically renew their skills. It could be added that the still relative permanence of staff in companies is an incentive for employers to invest in their learning.

However, learning and qualifications do not bring with them any guarantee of improved wages or promotion. This type of incentive for learning is easier to identify in some sectors. Teachers, for example, must complete their pedagogical training in order to receive permanent job tenure and recognition. Some sectoral collective agreements provide incentives to learn. In the retail sector, the collective agreement gives a premium of 5% each foreign language, while some department stores have additional incentives. In the insurance sector, the first of two exams gives entitlement to a fixed bonus and the upper-level exam usually leads to a pay rise related to career development. A new pay system is in force in 20% of the civil service. By 2002, an agreement will be negotiated with all public service unions making education and training by active participants visible in salaries. Further development of such agreements may be a way of deterring people from leaving courses prematurely to join the workforce, a problem which is growing significantly in tertiary education. In the ICT sector, 42% do not have relevant vocational qualifications.

3.2 Universal system yields good performance internationally

Finland has a strong belief in an equitable, universal system of educational provision. There was satisfaction to be had in the knowledge that during the recession, the Finnish model achieved its goals relatively well since income division remained quite even (see Heinonen, 2001). This explains, therefore, why no special measures have been developed for the unemployed, or even the long-term unemployed and other groups at risk. Labour market training, which is closely linked to existing supply, has a dual character: it is part of education and training, and part of labour market policy. It aims at providing an efficient way of providing employers with the personnel they need. Some of the courses followed are exactly the same as those for the employed. Some 40% of the labour market training prepares for work

Table 1: Participation in learning of 25-64 year-olds according to type of training and job status, 1994-1998 (Percentage)

	All Job Status	Employed	Unemployed	Out of the Labour Force
All types of training				
Germany	18.1	23.2	26.7	6.9
Australia	35.6	42.2	28.3	16.1
Belgium (Flanders)	21.5	26.8	*16.6	9.8
Canada	36.4	41.9	30.1	23.1
Chile	19.1	22.9	22.9	11.1
Denmark	56.2	60.7	51.1	39.0
United States	41.5	48.5	*30.2	16.9
Finland	**58.2**	**69.9**	**29.4**	**32.1**
Hungary	18.1	27.7	*9.5	*2.2
Ireland	22.0	29.4	*8.6	14.5
Netherlands	36.3	43.2	38.8	21.8
Norway	48.4	54.1	*33.2	21.8
New Zealand	46.4	53.1	31.4	29.7
Poland	14.1	20.5	*7.9	2.8
Portugal	13.0	16.7	*9.8	*4.7
Czech Republic	27.2	33.5	*14.3	7.8
United Kingdom	44.9	56.0	33.1	14.3
Slovenia	33.3	42.9	*13.7	10.5
Switzerland	41.5	45.7	32.3	27.3
Sweden	54.3	60.1	45.6	28.7
Average	*34.9*	*42.8*	*26.4*	*13.6*
Job-related training **				
Germany	14.9	20.1	25.1	*3.1
Australia	30.3	38.1	23.8	6.9
Belgium (Flanders)	14.0	19.8	*8.6	*0.9
Canada	29.6	37.5	22.0	9.9
Chile	11.7	17.0	*9.3	*2.5
Denmark	48.7	54.6	38.8	26.9
United States	37.6	45.2	*28.5	10.1
Finland	**40.0**	**51.1**	**11.6**	**15.8**
Hungary	12.8	19.8	*6.1	*1.4
Ireland	15.8	23.5	*7.1	6.6
Netherlands	24.1	32.5	*29.4	5.9
Norway	44.4	50.9	*26.7	14.5
New Zealand	38.4	46.9	24.1	16.3
Poland	10.6	16.5	*2.4	1.1
Portugal	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	21.7	27.3	*11.9	*4.4
United Kingdom	39.1	51.8	24.0	7.0
Slovenia	25.6	34.4	*9.1	*4.4
Switzerland	26.3	31.8	*26.9	6.0
Sweden	-	-	-	-
Average	*29.3*	*37.6*	*21.4*	*6.9*

Source: International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) — Second IALS (SIALS) (prepared by the authors).
* Less than 30 cases in the cell./ ** Not available for Portugal and Sweden.

Table 2: Public expenditures and participant inflows in labour market programs

	1985	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Expenditures as a percentage of GDP															
Total measures															
Finland	2.22	2.44	2.48	2.45	2.11	2.12	3.57	5.59	6.57	6.23	5.45	5.31	4.68	3.97	3.55
OECD average[a]	2.10					1.98					2.49			2.21	
Of which															
Active programmes															
Finland	0.90	0.92	0.94	1.06	0.97	0.99	1.36	1.77	1.69	1.64	1.54	1.69	1.54	1.39	1.22
OECD average[a]	0.66					0.69					0.89			0.84	
And															
Labour market training															
Finland	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.23	0.25	0.33	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.44	0.55	0.53	0.44	0.38
a) Training for unemployed adults and those at risk	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.23	0.25	0.33	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.43	0.54	0.52	0.42	0.34
b) Training for employed adults	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.04
OECD average[a]	0.16					0.20					0.25			0.22	
Participant inflows as a percentage labour force															
Labour market training															
Finland	..	1.24	1.29	1.23	1.27	1.40	2.02	2.89	2.79	3.27	3.69	4.70	5.35	4.39	4.01
a) Training for unemployed adults and those at risk	..	1.24	1.29	1.23	1.27	1.40	2.02	2.89	2.79	3.27	3.69	4.70	5.35	4.39	4.01
b) Training for employed adults	..	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OECD average[b]						2.31					4.08			4.40	

Source: OECD database on labour market programs.

a) The OECD unweighted average covers the year in question and, subject to availability, data from the preceding or following year(s). Data excludes the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Poland and Turkey.

b) The OECD unweighted average covers the year in question and, subject to availability, data from the preceding or following year(s). Data excludes the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Poland and Turkey.

3.3 Education and training insurance to overcome the "unemployment-no-training trap", but only for those with a very long employment record

Some of the unemployed are motivated by study support. Their training allowance, together with other transport and subsistence allowances, make it more attractive than the unemployment allowance. As a further incentive, the education and training insurance scheme was introduced as a kind of guarantee of financial aid to adults during their studies, based on their previous employment history. The scheme started in 1997 with the long-term unemployed, was extended in 1998 to all unemployed, and from 1 August 2001 it will be available to employed persons. The main objective is to support self-improvement through education. The scheme was devised to benefit the unemployed and one of its immediate effects was to overcome the problem that those in receipt of unemployment benefits could only avail of labour market training funded by the labour administration. The scheme in its present form will now enable those in receipt of earnings-related benefits, basic allowances or labour market support, and adults on leave of

absence to pursue independent or self-directed adult education for periods longer than labour market training. In theory, this development overcomes two problems: first is the fact that independent adult learning is financed at a lower rate than unemployment allowance; and second the granting flexibility to the unemployed to make their own choice regarding the education they choose and its duration. This system also gets rid of the obligation on the unemployed person to break off education if a job is offered to him/her.

In consequence of the comprehensive incomes and economy policy settlement (TUPO), the requirement regarding previous work history as a condition to access this scheme has been modified (see Box 12). The applicants are, thus, entitled to an allowance as long as they have been employed a minimum of 10 years, irrespective of whether their work history has been accumulated during the previous 15 years. This will also accommodate a growing number of individuals with current work patterns of short, temporary, or part-time contracts.

3.4 Which role for labour market training programmes — training the unemployed, training to fill "jobs"?

Labour market training is free to individual participants while some additional services to employers are subject to charges. It is administered by the Ministry of Labour and its implementation is decentralised to the labour market departments at the 15 Employment and Economic Development Centres (TE centres). Their 180 employment offices then organises the services, including training and vocational information services, vocational rehabilitation, and labour market training for adults. Most of the latter is purchased from local providers following organised calls for tenders.

Labour market training is a tool of labour market policy aimed to improve the supply of skilled workers and prevent shortages of labour. It is planned regionally in order to respond to the needs of local labour markets. TE centres collect data and prepare regional plans and chart regional training needs with the help of regional businesses and information from registers of job seekers. They also use questionnaires to follow participants progress after training and to monitor outcomes. This information is entered in a computerised register. Labour market training is designed to serve the needs of working life and normally includes on-the-job training. Employers have the opportunity to influence the planning and implementation of training and to participate in the selection of trainees. The prerequisites are there for an effective system and for many it works. The impact of the labour market training is monitored in the target outcome system of the Ministry of Labour. The system uses a parameter which compares the number of those who have re-registered as unemployed job-seekers after three months of training to the number of those who completed training. In 2000, the aim was that no more than 42% of those who had completed training would return to the register. It was mentioned during the visit that the public employment service needs to achieve high success rates: in North Karilia, it was declared that 58% of the participants in labour market training must be employed within two months of completing their training. The consequences are that the low-skilled unemployed may get the least chance when it comes to allocating places. Success rates may often be too narrowly defined and too focused on the short-term.

Participants in labour market training are ultimately chosen by an employment authority, that is, the responsibility of training lies with the employment office. The suitability, training motivation, and training needs of the prospective attendant should be taken into account when choosing the type of training. Also applicants with lower working-life skills – such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or people with multiple problems – are also selected for labour market training funded by the labour administration. In 2000, 80 % of those who began national labour market training were in this category: unemployed uninterruptedly for over a year (14%); those over 50 (14%); people with disabilities (9%); and those without former vocational education or training (43%).

In the case of recruitment training, which is jointly purchased with the employer, the employer naturally participates in the training of participants, as they are later recruited as employees in the same company. Owing to this, it is highly probable that those who have the best qualifications in terms of labour market skills, are selected. The objective has been to increase the share of recruitment training in vocational labour market training in co-operation with companies. Since 1997, its share has risen from 5.1% to 7.6%. In the case of joint purchases, the training is implemented either wholly or partially on companies' premises using their equipment. The objective is to include sections of on-the-job training or work practice in vocational labour market training in particular, but also in preparatory labour market training. At the other end of the scale, when people are very far from the labour market, training is not what motivates them unless it can be seen to have some immediate effects, such as a return to employment. However, existing programmes have not been able to achieve such results for everyone and, as an official pointed out in Joensuu, it is almost impossible to motivate less educated and older unemployed persons to participate in vocational training knowing that they might not get work when their subsidised training schemes finish. In Joensuu, one third of the unemployed are over 50, they have no education beyond basic education, and the jobs in which they have had many years work experience have disappeared, preparation for eventual new jobs requires complete retraining. They apply in great number for job-related training opportunities, but there is a scarcity of such placements. Employers will choose young blood, with higher basic qualifications than these older applicants. Most subsidised jobs are in the public sector, the majority in the municipalities, because although the private sector could provide them, legal problems with regard to job tenure prevent it.

The residual group falls into the trap of long-term unemployment. The National Action Plans[2] for Employment (NAPs) encourage European Union Member States to tackle the problems of unemployment and exclusion, and particularly to offer unemployed adults a "fresh start before reaching twelve months of unemployment" in the form of training, retraining, work placement, employment or individual guidance. Finland adapted a number of its employment and training policies in response to this challenge, and the Finnish NAP 2000 reports that long-term unemployment had fallen more quickly than total unemployment. In certain regions, such as Karelia, 30% of those affected by unemployment are, however, long-term unemployed. The kind of provision being purchased from the education institutions is not working for this group. Indeed, some of the long-term unemployed may be uninterested in participating in training programmes because of past frustrations with unsuccessful experiences in job-training programmes. Various maladies afflicting the long-term unemployed may feed on each other. They enter training programmes but do not get selected for a job, get discouraged, become depressed and alcoholic, further reducing their chances of becoming employed. As the social partners mentioned, it is a process that requires time to correct and existing mainstream programmes are not enough to deal with it. Specifically targeted action is needed, incorporating guidance and counselling, and individualised programmes to build up the competence on a progressive basis. The review team felt that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should be involved, as well as the Education and Labour, and strongly favours the Act on Rehabilitative Work enforced on 1 September 2001. The Act governs measures which seek to improve the chances of those receiving labour market support or means-tested income support on the basis of long-term unemployment to become employed in the open labour market. In addition, it promotes their opportunities to participate in training or benefit from other measures offered by the labour administration to support employment. Arranging rehabilitative work is a form of municipal social services. It is arranged in co-operation with the local labour administration and, depending on the need of the customer, also with the educational authorities.

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2. Since the Luxembourg European Council of November 1997, the so-called Luxembourg process involves the co-ordination of Member States' employment policies in the shape of employment guidelines and National Action Plans (NAPs). Each autumn, the Council adopts Employment Policy Guidelines on four pillars: entrepreneurship; employability; adaptability; equal opportunities. These guidelines are translated into national policy by the National Action Plans. NAPs are prepared by the Member States and submitted to the Commission and Council for examination by the following May.

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Concurrently, a skills gap is developing. 7 500 unemployed could be placed in the construction industry, but they do not have the necessary skills. Skill shortages are looming and Finland is slow to come to grips with the consequences of this. This is further accentuated by the growing skills gap between the unemployed (still 9% of the population and double digits in many regions) and the new jobs being created, primarily in the electronics sector are for knowledge workers. Coupled with this is the wish to move funds from labour market training and vocational training into other areas of education under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

3.5 Ageing adults, another group that needs incentives

There is awareness of the urgency to act on the ageing question. Proactive measures to promote the learning needs of older citizens have not been adequately addressed. 500 000 will retire by 2010, but the schools will only have prepared 200 000 new entrants to the labour market by then. This could potentially create a severe labour shortage and an overburdened social welfare system. The labour unions are aware of the approaching shortages and they agree that the retirement age must be prolonged, and adjusted along with better coordination of working and private life. The social partners agree that employees' skills should be renewed until normal retirement age. Currently the average age at retirement is 59, but this should be raised to at least 62 or 63, and people should also be given new opportunities to manage their working life and their exit, including part-time and staggered retirement models.

Government seems to support a policy of keeping people in employment by giving them more education. But several problems occur:

- Employers prefer to take on young adults because they get a longer return on their investment.
- Early retirement and other pre-pension schemes encourage them to stop work (see 6.6, paragraph 128).
- Many were in primary sector, construction or industrial jobs and need much retraining to work in new industries — the transition process is too long.

A preventive approach is laudable for anticipating the future but corrective measures are needed for those already in the trap. Suitable work places are needed to provide these people with an attractive alternative to retirement.

85% of young people are now leaving education with at least upper secondary qualifications. In the age group 44 to 54 it is only 60%, which implies that more and more the label low-skilled workers can be equated with the older worker group. As non-permanent contracts become more common, they will find themselves competing with the more qualified young people for new employment, or facing unemployment. If they are well advanced in working life, they will then be tempted to quit instead of trying to regain employment. Their situation is further hampered by the fact that they get less job-related training while in employment. In 1995, only 35% of workers with less than upper secondary qualifications received job-related training, compared with 48% of those with upper secondary qualifications, and 65% of those with tertiary education.

Investment in labour market training is being cut as unemployment decreases (see depreciation from 1997 onwards in Table 2). Instead, this budget could be maintained and used to develop the competence of the lower skilled workers in order to improve their employability. This would provide a proactive approach to preparing for future structural change. Manninen (1998) supports an innovative approach which tries to prepare for the unknown, which it is claimed is necessary in "training for change",

rather than training for jobs. Other countries, where unemployment rates have dropped significantly, have redirected funds to the advantage of such vulnerable groups, *e.g.* Denmark (see Table 1). A more gradual diminution of funding would be better from the point-of-view of properly administering the programme, as a sudden cut in funding wreaks havoc upon ongoing programmes. Legislation makes provision for labour market training to be used for employees, but this has not widely been implemented. Some 2.7% of those who participated in national labour market training in 1998 were employed while the figure in 1999 was 3.1% and 3.5% in 2000 respectively. The figures for participants facing a threat of unemployment were 3.5% in 1998, 4.2 % in 1999 and 4.0% in 2000. The share of those trained who were temporarily dismissed amounted to 1.9% in 1998; 3.1% in 1999 and 1.4 % in 2000. In practice, the employed have participated in different forms of jointly purchased rotation training. In addition, some of the employed participate in training wholly funded by the labour administration. Through extension of the education and training insurance scheme to the employed in its third phase makes, they now have a new way of securing income during training.

3.6 Addressing the needs of special groups

In the regions, training for those in work has been developed with European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 4 support, while individual training solutions for the long-term unemployed are developed with funding from Objective 3. A sound and systematic evaluation of these programmes could give some indication on how resources should be reoriented and used to help buttress the skills of the "at risk" segments of the labour force. Decision-makers should also look at the recently introduced programme for immigrants,[3] as it provides an example of "targeted and tailor-made" education (see Box 1).

3. There are circa 100 000 immigrants in Finland, less than 2% of the population. Following legislation in 1999, immigrants became entitled to an integration plan over three years, which may include, education, training and working in companies. They receive an allowance, similar to that of the unemployed and financed by the Ministry of Labour and the regional governments, provided they and their sponsors adhere to the plan.

Box 1: Educational service for immigrants

Lessons in tailoring courses to special needs can be taken from the service provided to immigrants, which is structured in a number of phases:

Induction

- Finnish or Swedish language.
- Introduction to Finnish society and culture, the education system, working life, etc.
- Improving study skills, computer training and maths.

On-the-job training

- Many immigrants must change profession when they arrive in Finland, this gives them the opportunity to see what work is like in Finland and how it differs from their own experience.
- Counselling
- Group and personal guidance on social issues, education, training and entering working life.
- A personal study plan is drawn up.
- Special training
- For the illiterate and those with no school background.
- Vocational language courses (are only possible in the south because, elsewhere, there are too few non-native speakers with which to form courses).

Orientation courses for target groups

- Women, youth and those changing profession.

Preparatory training

- Prior to initial vocational education and training.

Vocational training

- Initial, continuing, further and apprenticeship training.

3.7 Gender divide

Women far outnumber men in many areas of adult education (see Table 3). They may be compensating for less career progression (due to time taken voluntarily out of the labour force, for example) by learning new things, since statistics do not show that women are more often represented in managerial and high-ranking posts in Finland than in other countries. Table 4 shows that, although men and women are equally represented in the workforce, 75% of senior and managerial positions are still held by men.

Table 3: Participation in learning of 25-64 year-olds according to job status, type of training and gender, 1997-1998 (Percentage)

	All types of training			Job-related training		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
All	58.2	54.4	62.0	40.0	39.6	40.4
Employed	69.9	65.5	74.5	51.1	50.5	51.7

Source: IALS-SIALS (prepared by the authors from the same sample as Table 1).

Table 4: Employees by socio-economic status, 1999

	Women		Men		Total	
	Number*	%	Number*	%	Number*	%
Employees total	986	50	989	50	1 975	100
Upper-level white-collar workers	201	44	261	56	462	100
of which senior officials and upper management	23	25	69	75	92	100
Lower-level white-collar workers	544	71	219	29	763	100
Blue-collar workers	238	32	505	68	744	100

* Per one thousand people.
Source: Statistics Finland, http://www.stat.fi/tk/he/tasaarvo_tyo_en.html

The adult education survey 1995 shows that women were more active in learning than men (Statistics Finland, 1999*a*). This manifests itself in almost all types of education. In liberal adult education this is perhaps to be expected because traditionally women participate more in leisure-time educational activities for social reasons, and child-care facilities are widely available to them in Finland. But, the phenomenon is also found in the open-university courses, where 77% of students are women, and in university continuing professional education in which, for example at Tampere, 72.5% are women. The research being carried out by Suikkanen (2001) on work transformation and adult education needs shows that women are also more likely than men to have more than one qualification.

But gender difference in choice still remains. The Folk High Schools (FHS), the Swedish community, and polytechnics, all report a lack of interest by women in technical and ICT areas, despite some attempts at positive discrimination. The male-female breakdown at Häme Polytechnic is now 50-50, but gender divides also exist, more women are in business and health courses, while natural resources and technical fields still have a majority of male students. For over 20 years now, authorities have been working on this question. At State level, programmes, targets, and working groups have been set-up to no great avail.

3.8 The problem of the non-participants

There seems to be a large set of entangled factors — extrinsic or financial incentives in some sectors, more intrinsic incentives elsewhere — that can help one understand why adult education is a strong and tangible reality for about 60% of the population (see Table 1). The problem concerns those who do not participate spontaneously, although they might be those who are most in need of some kind of further education. Government knows from work carried out by Statistics Finland (see below) that non-learners frequently have a low level of education and come from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. They are often afflicted by unemployment or social problems, and may be at risk of losing their jobs due to their low level of competence. What remains to be done is to target their needs and strengthen their incentives to learn.

Statistics Finland (1999*b*) undertook its first Adult Education Survey in 1980. Its purpose was to produce statistical tables for planning and decision-making on adult education and training, with an emphasis on vocational adult studies. Repeated in 1990, the survey started to be moulded into a high-quality database and included data on the population's willingness to and needs for participation in education and training, obstacles to participation and views on education. The 1995 survey was influenced by the economic recession and high unemployment. It studied the working age population (aged 16 to 64) and allowed links between education and training and unemployment to be analysed. The 2000 survey,

currently being analysed, was designed to facilitate comparisons with the 1990 and 1995 surveys and international surveys possible, and it has new questions on information technology skills.[4]

These surveys provide a rich source of information. It may be that supplementary surveys are necessary, but a good basis already exists for drawing some conclusions on how to improve participation of these groups at risk.

There are two problems for Statistics Finland:

- They lack information about certain groups of people (such as the long-term unemployed) and their motivations and responsiveness to various possible incentives. The sample survey applying to the entire population does not allow for thorough analyses of specific groups. Owing to this, research by interviewing these specific groups could be helpful.
- Students studying for their first qualification also avail of educational opportunities targeted at adults, this fact must be taken into account and reflected in the statistics.

In order to enhance the efficiency of policy measures aimed at specific groups, more detailed and thorough group-specific statistical data is required.

4. HOW INTEGRATED IS THE APPROACH TO PROVISION AND PARTICIPATION?

4.1 General comment

Most educational institutions essentially active in initial education (see Table 5) develop specific programmes for adults. They are more concentrated, generally take place in the evening or during the week-end, and are based on a specific pedagogy (including less sessions with a teacher). In addition, adult education centres provide liberal education, and there are upper secondary schools and vocational centres specifically for adults. The schools are autonomous, but there are strict guidelines, regulations, standards, qualifications and examinations that guarantee a certain uniformity throughout the country. The adult education system in Finland is like an offshoot of the main formal education system for young people and, in principle, both groups have access to the same provision. Its hybrid features are unique. Public funding prevails, but provision is ensured by very diverse autonomous institutions with very different backgrounds and history (*e.g.* from Polytechnics created in the 1990s to Folk High Schools that date back to the 19th century). Competition seems to play a growing role, principally in the Southwest due to the concentration of providers and population. Nonetheless, regulation still rests mainly with the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Labour. The interesting thing is that, since the early 1990s, the latter have developed original approaches to regulation. To some extent traditional top-down "bureaucratic" mechanisms seem to have been replaced by "output-based" control schemes such as "target setting" or "competence-based" certification standards. This dual-shift probably echoes the need to individualise adult education, to make it more flexible, but also the need for enhanced co-ordination among the different providers and actors. People should be able to plan and combine different learning alternatives, but simultaneously decision-makers express the need "to assess the resources of different learning environments as a whole" and call for "more effective co-ordination".

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4. Initial results of the 2000 survey are soon to be made available. They will give details of participation of different population groups by age, sex, level of education, status at work, family situation, etc. They will provide information on the willingness of each group to participate in adult education and training, the obstacles and difficulties they report, and how they view education in terms of the effects it has on their working life and life skills, and how all of these have changed since the 1980s.

Currently, the system has two tiers. The Ministry of Labour provides learning for jobs. Labour offices select people with a focus on the needs of the labour market and, for the moment, this means emphasising IT and technical qualifications. The Ministry of Education has a more universal policy of learning for change and providing skills and qualifications to create better lives. In both cases, surveys are used to plan the offer of education and training.

Table 5: Types and number of institutions offering adult education

Type of institution	Number of institutions
National special vocational institutes	12
Music institutions	11
Study centres	11
Physical education centres	13
Universities	20
Summer universities	21
AMK institutions (polytechnics)	30
Adult vocational education centres	48
Special vocational institutes	43
Upper secondary schools (for adults)*	441
Folk high schools	90
Adult education centres	269
Vocational institutes	221
Total	1230

* Originally 51 provided for adults, latest legislation allows provision for adults in all upper secondary schools.
Source: based on Koulutuksen järjestäjät ja oppilaitokset 2000, Tilastokesus (Education providers and educational institutions 2000, Statistics Finland)

4.2 Specific opportunities for adults

The institutional framework for adult education is well developed in Finland. As seen from Table 5, adults have a wide choice of education and training at various levels. Opportunities for adults are, to a large extent, provided by the regular educational establishments, especially at tertiary level, *i.e.* by universities and polytechnics. At the lower levels, adult education centres and adult vocational centres provide specific types of courses tailored to the needs of adults. More and more adults are choosing the apprenticeship option enabling them to combine their job with part-time VET, both to achieve upper secondary and further vocational qualifications.

Most educational institutions essentially active in initial education (universities, polytechnics) develop specific programmes for adults. They are more concentrated, generally take place in the evening or during the weekend, and are based on a specific pedagogy. Universities offer courses to adults with a certain standard of initial education, thus their educational offer could be classified as education aimed at upgrading students' skills.

4.3 Second chance for adults

Institutions co-operate to provide comprehensive and upper secondary qualifications for adults. There are about 30 schools specialising in upper secondary education for adults and another 20 which

provide study lines for adults. At the moment, these schools are usually attended by young adults who have problems with or have dropped out of upper secondary education. There is no nation-wide initiative in Finland to mobilise adults who have not completed compulsory and upper secondary education to do so, such as the Adult Education Initiative in Sweden. However, such schools make opportunities available to adults for this purpose (see Box 2). This is likely to become a growth area over the coming years, particularly among older adults, since research (Parjanen and Tuomi, 2001) emphasises the discrepancy between the level of education of older and younger cohorts, and the social partners (see Box 12) are concerned about the older cohorts lack of qualifications. This worry reflects the high standards being set for the future workforce in Finland.

Box 1. Tampere upper secondary school for adults

In Tampere, there are circa 1 000 students annually enrolled, around 700 of whom are full-time. Most are aiming at certification. Matriculation takes three to four years, one year more than normal matriculation. 160 are single subject students, mostly taking languages. One of the advantages of this type of school is that it offers students the chance to take their vocational qualification, school-leaving certificate and university-entrance examination all at once. About 450 do this triple exam and results have been good. Many graduates continue in polytechnic or university education.

Most of the students take up the option of a vocational education qualification. Each individual has their own study plan, drawn up with the help of a teacher and an advisor if necessary. They are in very close co-operation with vocational schools and they define a specific profession for students pursuing this route. Although these schools are targeted at adults, most of the students are in their early twenties. Many do not have good results in compulsory school and they change because of their difficulties. The school has good relations with the normal upper secondary schools for the young, some of which are almost directing their problematic students to the adult school. They are setting up joint programmes with the youth schools to deal with problem students.

Dropout rates at the adult school are high to begin with. Teaching hours are less, 20 not 30 hours per week, and there is less time for discussion. However, these youth want to be treated as adults. The school would also like to help them by providing more counselling, but these services are provided within the sphere of authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs or the Ministry of Labour for job-related guidance.

At the beginning, most of the students were completing comprehensive school level education. When the number dropped to five or six students this type of education was discontinued. Two other schools in the city continue to provide for this level. For immigrants they offer language courses (which in Tampere is confined to a group of 25). As the number of adults requiring upper secondary schooling drops, new target groups will be needed, but the school does not see itself in a position to cope with marginalised groups in society.

The teachers are all professionals, some of whom only work in that school but many of whom are also working in day schools. So far they have had no problem attracting their teachers who are dedicated to their jobs, despite the inconveniences, *e.g.* late working hours, student profile. A shortage of teachers is, however, on the horizon. Like almost all adult schools, Tampere has now embarked on distance learning and teachers are deeply involved. At least one-third contact teaching is still maintained, in addition to e-mail, tutorials and teacher visits when problems arise. Facilities need to improve, and more IT teachers, computers and equipment are needed as this newest group of distance learners grows.

4.4 Serving atypical clients

Folk High Schools (FHS) are nation-wide boarding schools, mainly located outside urban areas.[5] 34 are independently run, while the others are maintained by political, religious or trade union organisations. Today, there are 91 FHS in Finland and the total number of students they serve is about 5 000. They are fee-charging schools, and because they are live-in establishments this may make it difficult for many adults to attend longer courses because of family responsibilities. Week-end and summer courses

5. Nikolai Grundtvig (1783-1872), a Danish bishop, poet, historian, and educationalist founded the FHS movement in Denmark in which Christian belief and peasant culture were taught and served to regenerate Danish heritage and national identity. FHS now exist throughout Scandinavia as residential schools, mostly for young adults seeking an alternative education and values, often following unsatisfactory experiences in mainstream compulsory education. The EU has launched the Grundtvig Programme to promote elements of Nordic liberal education.

are organised with the needs of working adults in mind. Each school is free to emphasise its own ideology or educational objectives (see Box 3). Although they are State subsidised, they do not like interference from the State and they insist on their own freedom and value systems. They have no entrance requirements or leaving qualifications, and attendance is completely voluntary.

Box 2. PäivÖlä FHS

This folk high school from the Tampere region has a growing student population. It fills a special market need in supplying accelerated education for highly talented young people. Its objective is to develop student personality. It finds fault with mainstream education because it creates a lack of student motivation and working relationships with the teacher. They would like to see the system change to include a sense of being together and collective motivation, which they strive to cultivate in their school. It has three strands:

- Hobby courses, mainly in the summer or at weekends.
- Courses for war veterans.
- Intensive courses for high ability students at upper secondary level in maths, physics and tourism/travel guide, accelerated to fit into one year.

For the latter group, PäivÖlä co-operates closely with the local adult secondary schools so that the students can complete their matriculation. They have picked this niche and concentrate on that, as well as promoting co-operative and group learning. NOKIA sponsors the maths and physics courses because it believes that there is a need for talented young people in these fields and it is advertisement for them.

The school has been very entrepreneurial in taking on some large social problems, by providing a place for unusual students with strong, focused interests who do not fit socially or intellectually in the traditional approach to instruction.

4.5 Sharing and integrating services versus market forces

Although the central government still has a strong role, it would like to see market forces playing a strong co-ordination role. Since decentralisation and the transition to a customer-provider model occurred, greater numbers of educational institutions are competing to supply the same type of courses. The type of institution is no longer a reliable indicator for understanding the service it provides. Concern has been expressed about the discrepancies in costs for the same services at various educational establishments. A new pricing system geared at having each customer pay the same price is being discussed, but such measures work contrary to the wish to have market forces prevail.

Flexibility and good networking exists between many providers, but not between polytechnics and universities where one can detect the emergence of real competition. This may have originated when the polytechnics received generous financing in their start-up phase, but now it is more based on competitive market factors. There is a growing demand for higher education and continuing professional education, and Finland is now well served to supply this market. At local level, authorities and providers must co-ordinate their services better in order to ensure that their clients have access to the full range of vocational qualifications. Providers should, therefore, network closely, but at the same time, recent reforms point to the fact that the State would like it to be market-led. This again seems to be a priori relatively contradictory, as it is not obvious that local collaboration and increased competition go hand in hand. One should also bear in mind that there is no real education market outside the Southwest area. In more remote regions local authorities have a monopoly.

Decentralisation and the setting up of the new regional co-ordination bodies encouraged the pooling of services and resources by municipalities. The introduction of joint administration of one or more municipality also made it possible to combine resources from a number of smaller or less populated or less affluent municipalities and to build up joint services in areas such as health, child care and education. Resources and provision of so-called collateral services are apparently plentiful in the South and

other highly populated areas. Some problems might exist in remote areas where low density might make cost per inhabitant so high that public authorities might be reluctant or can not afford to produce these services in large quantity. In North Karelia, for instance, the priority is on creating jobs and bringing down the rate of unemployment which still stands at 19%. Municipalities, therefore, provide the majority of subsidised jobs and concentrate a lot of effort on providing advice and information to entrepreneurs and companies setting up in the area, and in trying to keep human resources and economic activity in the area.

Co-ordination between educational and non-educational segments is ensured in some cases through vertical integration, *i.e.* the education providers deliver/produce the service themselves *intra muros*. The Adult Education Centre in Tampere shares its main building with a day school for young secondary level students and offers services throughout the city in libraries and community centres, sharing child care and other services (see Box 4). In other cases, municipalities seem to play a decisive role. Yet the tendency towards extended autonomy or competition among providers since the 1990s could make co-ordination more complicated and compromise the benefit of sharing some fixed costs (running one crèche for several education centres being an example).

Box 3. Adult Education Centre of the City of Tampere (Sampola)

As in most educational establishments in Finland, freedom is a basic principle of the centre - freedom for students to make independent choices and freedom for the Adult Education Centre (AEC) itself to provide such courses as thought to be currently relevant. The centre aims to encourage individual growth, new ideas and the capacity and willingness for lifelong learning among its students. Student motivation is very high and more than 80% of students finish their courses. Most students say their motivation is not professional, rather they desire to discover new things, make or create something for themselves, get to know new people, move outside the home. Some of these reasons may reflect the high female participation rate.

At Sampola, which is the main venue for the AEC's activities, evening courses, as well as daytime and short intensive courses are provided. The building is shared with a comprehensive school for 13 to 15 year olds which curtails daytime provision for adults, but otherwise the two coexist well. Tampere has a good transportation system which makes access to Sampola easy and courses are also arranged in other venues throughout the city.

Unlike its Scandinavian neighbours, where the philosophy of adult liberal education is also widespread, AECs in Finland are public institutions under the jurisdiction of the municipalities. They are publicly subsidised and regulated by law. The principal is a member of the City of Tampere staff and all full-time staff are employees of the municipality. Likewise, the AEC has a board comprising members of the city council which decides on what the centre does, but the centre itself decides on the curriculum for each course. AEC Tampere gets 40% of its budget from the State, 40% from the City of Tampere and 20% from student fees. On average in Finland, AECs receive 52% from the State, 28% from the municipality, 15% from students fees and the remainder from sales of services to employers, etc. In poorer municipalities, State financing may dominate. Competition is high in the market for supplying employers and for this reason Tampere AEC prefers to stick to the field of liberal education.

Unemployment is about 16% in the Tampere region. The AEC offers a 50% reduction to unemployed students. It sees itself as having a social role in the community and heterogeneous learning groups are considered part and parcel of encouraging social cohesion and mixing people regardless of their social or life situation. Having said that, publicity for the centre is done through mailing of brochures twice yearly, advertising in the local newspaper, and through its own Internet home page. Consequently, the average attendee has a middle-class background. Around 15% of students have higher education degrees. As fees rise, and this has been very much the case since the recession, more people from the higher income group attend, changing the client profile. A survey is currently being processed in Tampere which found that only 5% found the prices too high.

The only deviation from this mainstream type of provision consists of Finnish language courses for immigrants, courses for dyslexic people and in the gypsy language. But no more funds are available for such activities, in particular for immigrants whose education and training is the task or the Ministry of Labour, as they are considered from the point of view of potential labour force only. Asked if they would consider providing for the unemployed or low-skilled groups, they said they would need a budget from the Ministry of Labour before considering this option.

4.6 Openness to change and innovation

The diversity of institutions (public centres, folk high schools, schools controlled by foundations, etc.), the emergence of new providers (like the Polytechnics) suggest that the 1990s has been a period of relative "openness" of the adult education market. Another sign of "openness" and increased competition is that the distinction between liberal and vocational institutions (horizontal differentiation) no longer holds so much. Where the demand exists, both can provide services to employers or labour market training. The same seems to be true along the vertical axis as:

- De facto initial education institutions now organise programmes for adults (*e.g.* polytechnics) and vice versa.
- The traditional hierarchy (particularly between universities and polytechnics) is called into question.

Although the law does not prevent the establishment of new education institutions this is, however, rare. It can be argued that the effort made by the Ministry of Education and the social partners to develop competence-based certification mechanisms creates a context in which new providers or new programmes, developed by established providers, but outside their usual domain, can flourish and rapidly gain credibility with the public. Without standardised certification, incumbents are usually protected by "reputation". Public providers have been given the freedom to expand, thus accumulating large economies

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of scale, scope, and learning. This, in turn, puts new entrants into the education services market at a severe disadvantage.

Nevertheless, private adult education provision is negligible in Finland. Where private companies exist, it is mainly to provide personnel training for employees, with ICT and languages courses prevailing. Understandably, it is difficult to compete in a market where up to now most of the providers have been public bodies with State support and the individual's financial contribution has been low. Their clients are, therefore, mostly companies. Unless they are Internet providers, most of the private education suppliers are concentrated in large cities. The main barrier to their establishment in some remote and lowly populated areas is simply the size of the local market, or in the case of the Swedish community and remote regions, the potential customers are too dispersed. The high cost of equipment is another factor that deters private sector provision in the area of technical and vocational training.

4.7 AMK institutes — polytechnics

Finland has done well in terms of incorporating existing providers into the new arrangements following reforms, but also introducing new elements to complement them. One of the big changes was the creation of the AMK colleges or polytechnics. One of the reasons for this was European integration. Students from the former post-secondary colleges (which they replaced) were not recognised by higher education institutes in other EU countries for the purpose of exchanges, placements, nor could they have their diplomas recognised at the appropriate level. However, their creation was most timely in providing new professional or work-oriented degrees for the heavily technology-based economy that has emerged in Finland since the recession of the early 1990s. They also provide a new progression route for secondary school leavers and employees who have chosen a vocational pathway to continue or to rediscover new forms or professional higher education.

Thirty of these new establishments were created, making Finland one of the most well endowed countries when it comes to higher education provision, with 50 institutions now catering for around five million people, in addition to open learning facilities. This proliferation of opportunities also explains why Finns learn. The new polytechnics, despite their specific role in professional higher education, are a source of keen competition for the universities. In their development phase, the polytechnics are receiving generous State support and the business world has also noted their existence and potential. Like the adult education establishments, the polytechnics are run on a semi-commercial basis Seven polytechnics are maintained by single municipalities, eleven by joint municipal boards, eight by limited companies and three by foundations. The ownership of a polytechnic can be wholly private, although they receive financing from the public funds. The polytechnics receive three kinds of public funding: core funding, project funding, and performance-based funding. Core funding is granted on the basis of calculated unit prices. The costs are shared by the state (57%) and municipalities (43%), but the recipient can decide on the allocation of the resources within the educational system. In Häme this so-called easy money amounts to about two-thirds of the annual turnover, the remainder has to be raised from sales of services (see Box 5).

Polytechnics have brought a number of advantages:

- Specialisation in technology, applied sciences.
- Improved standards of professional and continuing professional education.
- More integration between learning and working life.

Integrating adult groups has been a challenge for the polytechnics. It is still developing and changing as experience is accrued. Project work and workplace tasks are becoming a regular feature. This type of provision has a number of advantages for adults. It is mainly part-time and pursued alongside employment in close relation to one's professional life. Often, the success of adult provision can be attributed to the aptitude of some teacher to animate adult groups, which can be difficult when their experience, backgrounds and standards differ. The question of assessing earlier courses and providing preparatory tuition to get them back to a learning routine is also a challenge.

Polytechnics aim to serve local needs and to be involved with companies and the development of the area. Tampere polytechnic is monitoring those leaving the work force over the next five years in an attempt to ensure that the 30 to 40% of those in the mechanical engineering and automation sectors who will retire will be replaced by trained people, now that the city has successfully transformed its industry base from textiles to mechanical machinery. They try to develop an examination system which is flexible enough to accommodate rapid change. They are constantly discussing the content with students and industry to ensure that their future needs are met. Their teachers are also chosen because of their local expertise. Along with 200 full-time teachers, 700 experts from the field work on specific courses.

Box 4. Häme Polytechnic

Häme Polytechnic is an integral part of the regional development fabric and is situated in Hämeenlinna in the centre of the region. Most of their services are educational, but they also engage in other activities, *e.g.* quality control or production line improvements in local companies. The region does not have a university to compete with, although Tampere university in the neighbouring region is geographically not too far away.

Häme Polytechnic has a high proportion of project activity. Their clients are chiefly looking for development of expertise and research and product development. The main areas of expertise are IT, bio-sciences, the environment, and health and welfare. Project contracts accounted for over 70 million FIM in 2000, many of them dealing with IT and media technology, workplace learning, and environmental projects, such as Santa's road with the National Tourism Network.

Of the 6 000 students at Häme, 2 633 are under 25. The average student in the over 25 age group has about eight years of work experience. The majority of students are doing an initial degree combined with work, and attending evening, week-end, and summer courses. Adult groups have less classroom hours and more individual tuition than junior students, and some of the classes are mixed. Course work and projects exploit their experience and the opportunities offered by their workplaces. The standards and exams are the same for all students. The remaining adults attend continuing professional development courses. They are concentrating on upgrading to initial degree level the education of adults who spent two or three years in the former post-secondary institutes. But when this is complete the profile of students will change and they will compete with universities. Their aim is to concentrate on the level of expert in companies (if we take it that there are three levels of employees - workers, experts and bosses). Many people work with ICT and there is a shortage of these skills in the area. Some participants come to do specific courses in ICT for one year. They also try to anticipate needs and are providing targeted courses in hardware, ICT courses in graphics for artists and people with artistic talent.

Adult student motivation comes from wanting to have a degree in case they decide to change jobs. Formal qualifications are becoming a requirement in many jobs and they would like to have the security of a degree. There is also competition from the better-educated young people so they want to upgrade their skills.

4.8 Work and learning

To combine "work" and "learning" is apparently relatively easy in Finland. There are essentially two reasons for this:

- Employers are "pro-training", at least when it is job-related or vocational. This means that Finnish workers can get access to training during working hours and generally keep their full salary. The cost generally incurred by training opportunities is, thus, fully supported by the employers. Today, on average, 5% of a company's payroll is spent on training, up from 2% in

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1993. The reason for this is attributed to the great need for training incurred by vast structural changes and innovations within companies themselves, though not all participate equally in training. In the service sector, larger companies provide on average one and a half days training per annum while in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) it is four, and in industry it is the reverse.

- The Finns have organised the working day in such a way that work is generally over at 4 pm. This leaves plenty of room for learning activities. Additionally, many workplaces have access to the Internet.

Paradoxically, to combine "unemployment" and "learning" is more complex:

- Unemployed people cannot automatically gain access to labour market training programmes. In 2000, the number of applications for national labour market training amounted to approximately 166 000. Employment offices could accommodate some 60 000 customers; 60% of the supply was vocational training while some 40 % comprised preparatory training. Even with these numbers, the EU's Employment Guideline of reaching a minimum of 20% of unemployed job-seekers has been well exceeded. However, the labour administration resources are clearly inadequate to cater for the training needs of such a large number of people. The applicants are chosen for training on the basis of suitability, motivation, and educational need, and while there is a referral service for others, not enough opportunities exists for the residual group.
- Most of the subsidised work programmes in existence have no long-term perspectives or training component and it is difficult to motivate people to join them as they know that most likely they will return to unemployment on completion.
- There is a lack of in-company training places for the unemployed. Those that exist are keenly contested. The older unemployed apply for these in great numbers, but employers do not want older people because they are nearing the end of their career and also because they probably have had no training beyond basic education (see Section 3.4).
- Unemployed people — unless they have an employment record of 10 years — cannot keep their unemployment allowance during training (see discussion on education insurance).

Employers purchase much of their training from the adult education sector, *e.g.* Metso Corporation (see Box 6). The social partners have strong ties with many of the subject-specific vocational schools which are catering for the needs of particular sectors, (*e.g.* Jollas Institute, Box 9). Occasionally, trade unions also run tailor-made training for specific target groups. The Siikaranta Folk High School, run by the unions, has a course providing comprehensive education for low qualified adults in the construction sector. Because of its residential nature, it can only serve 20 to 30 adults per academic year, but it is an illustration of what can be done for targeted groups.

Box 5. Metso Corporation

Although Metso has half its personnel (11 000) in Finland, it outsources almost all training except induction and basic training in Metso products and processes and some other company-specific aspects, such as team-building. Unlike many companies, it encourages potential employees to complete their degrees before joining the labour market. This is a problem in Finland especially in engineering and ICT-related studies that many students break-off their courses prematurely to enter employment. A higher education degree is necessary for much of the work at Metso, which is heavily male dominated because most of the work is in engineering and processing. The Metso academy supports employees and potential employees pursuing doctoral degrees. 39 students are currently studying for a PhD and most base their thesis on subjects closely related to the company.

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Specialised vocational institutions, 43 in total, arrange both long-term and short-term additional vocational training, and also provide labour market training. Some of the educational institutions operate nationally and provide education and training which is open to all company employees including those who seek education independently. The common denominator in all specialised institutions is the close link with education and training with working life. Some are maintained by one company to train staff for special tasks in their field. The prerequisite for long courses (one or two years) is usually successful completion of a general vocational education or matriculation examination. In recent years, the number of applicants has been very high, and far outnumbered student places. The expertise of educational institutions arranging open courses is utilised in many ways. Together with traditional courses arranged at the institution, company-specific development programmes have rapidly increased. The expertise of the staff both in specialised vocational institutions and corporate staff is utilised in developing the company. Company-specific implementation makes it possible to offer training to more staff than if it were to be implemented outside the company. Courses are developed in line with the company's needs. The duration of individual courses has become shorter but, simultaneously, the courses are providing qualifications tailored to individual needs. Very many of the courses are also suited to provide the theoretical background in preparation for vocational qualification examinations (see Box 9).

4.9 Building individual pathways

The variety of institutions and providers, and the fact that many of them co-operate or provide joint services, opens the way for adults to pick and choose. It also gives some room for change of direction within courses. It is also becoming easier for adults who have left education early to return or for those who have chosen a vocational path to continue their education to a higher level or to change mid-stream to a more academic route. One of the keys to this flexibility lies in the competence-based vocational qualification framework (see Box 7). As competencies are defined by employers and professionals (in collaboration with educators), it is to be expected that individuals possessing the corresponding certificates would be "recognised" in the market/workplace. Since these competencies are certified according to centrally defined criteria, they must also have currency nation-wide.

Both elements are *a-priori* positive, however there are a few nuances:

- Nothing is done in Finland at the central level to ensure that adult graduates are entitled to some minimum wage premium or promotion. Can decentralised decision-marking (external or internal labour market decisions) be relied on for this?
- As mentioned above, at the level of higher education many students leave the system without a certificate because having the qualification does not entitle them to a better position or a guaranteed wage.
- The liberal segment of adult education is not part of the competence-based system and the Background Report shows that 50% of additional vocational training was non-certificate oriented in 1999 (Heinonen, 2001). This could be seen as a problem. At the same time, there are probably plenty of observers who support the view that adult education is more than simply transferring some extra human capital and making sure that some extra money is made.

4.10 Well-developed guidance and counselling services, but only for those who show up

Guidance and counselling services are mainly provided at the employment offices or at certain schools and training centres (see Section 5.4). Existing services are professionally provided but only for

those who are willing to show up. A more holistic and pro-active guidance service, available on a recurrent basis throughout the life course, with special targeting for the long- term unemployed and those with a low level of education and lack of motivation is not yet in evidence. No attempts are made to go into the community and reach people who may be unaware of their needs or will not seek assistance of their own accord, *e.g.* a 'one-stop-shop' in a shopping centre where they might wander in and find information and advice on a range or educational, social and employment issues. Nor has specific consideration been given to people living in remote rural areas, and elderly people who might be reluctant to come out and search.

By contrast, Finland is at the forefront regarding general access to the Internet and web-sites informing about or providing adult education opportunities. A pilot project, Opintoluotsi, which should end in 2002, is looking at the possibility of a comprehensive information system in the field of education. It will comprise a web site with comprehensive information on all provision. It will be accompanied by guidance facilities and make use of a network of libraries and community centres. It should be remembered that personal contact and trust are keys to good guidance and counselling, and it is an activity that takes time and needs to be revisited when the person requires. While the information function can be assisted by databases and Internet, the role of the counsellor can never be replaced.

5. WHAT IS BEING DONE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY, PEDAGOGY AND VARIETY OF LEARNING PROVISIONS?

As seen in the previous chapter, the provision of learning for adults is assured by a number of different educational institutions, all of which have either undergone reform or upgrading in the 1990s to provide a flexible, high-quality system geared to the needs of a modern economy. Delivery in adult education has also been redesigned to suit the needs of adults. Some features include:

- Intensive courses for people with little time.
- Timed for evening, weekend or summer attendance.
- Capability of recognising prior learning and experience.
- Internet and other virtual possibilities.
- Audio-visual and distance learning tools.

The system is still expanding to allow adults to develop individual pathways. Personalised programmes are characterised by:

- Personal study plans.
- Modular courses to allow flexibility and choice.
- Acceleration through programmes based on accreditation of existing knowledge and experience.
- Skill tests after each module, and credit transfer systems which allow mobility between programmes.

Allowing for flexibility and individualisation has to be balanced with adequate and coherent standards to ensure transparency and consistency. Both the individual and the employer need standards that they can use as benchmarks. In Finland, this is provided by the competence-based qualification system (see Box 7).

5.1 National vocational qualification system

Quality standards are based on the evaluation of students. The competence-based qualification system provides a national standard. It is based on a competence-based examination open to all adults, regardless of where or how they acquired their professional competence. Competence-based vocational qualifications or student evaluation based on outcomes of learning works very well. It has developed like a national currency to give value to what the individual learns, no matter where or how she/he learns, and as evidence to show to an employer. It is proving satisfactory both from the side of the individual and business and industry. Providers are happy to supply courses tailored to the competencies set out in the national framework.

Emphasis is on personalised service, information and plans, leading to a qualification. Not only adults themselves, but employers now expect this from providers. The system has been developing since 1994 and mechanisms to achieve this are still to some extent theoretical, but their realisation is in sight. It comprises three types of qualification: basic vocational qualification corresponding to youth level VET; further vocational qualification which recognises the skill and competence required of a skilled worker; and specialist vocational qualification which certifies mastery of the most demanding job skills in a particular field.

Box 6. Competence-based qualification system

This showpiece of integration has a number of unifying features, including:

- Common to youth and adult training on an equal footing.
- Certificates provided are hard currency on labour market.
- Nation-wide form of student evaluation.
- System of assessment by skill tests, to demonstrate competence regardless of where it has been acquired.
- Accreditation of prior learning and experience, both formal and non-formal.
- Closely connected to real world of work.
- Vocational qualifications ranging from initial or basic level to skilled worker and mastercraftsman level.
- Transparency and standardisation of courses leading to competence-based qualifications at various educational establishments.

The Ministry of Education decides on which qualifications to include in the structure and on a set of national qualification guidelines. Currently, there are 350, the requirements, modules and assessment criteria for which have been specified by the National Board of Education (NBE). This is reviewed annually (NBE, 2000). The NBE appoints Qualification Committees or expert groups in each sector to draw-up, organise and supervise the tests of competence. They are also involved in drawing up the criteria for competencies and training the assessors. Committees have a maximum of nine members representing the employees, employers, the self-employed, and teachers.

In the Competence-based vocational qualifications system, the same standards are applied to youth and adults. Candidates from labour market training, apprenticeship, self-motivated or job-related training can acquire this qualification. Educational institutions organising preparatory training decide on the contents of the training for competence-based qualifications. Courses are broken into modules, with usually four to seven modules per qualification. Skills tests are performed after every module and for adults this can cut study time by one-third to one-half. Students, with the assistance of teachers, draw up their own personal study programmes, which take account of previous studies and work experience.

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Box 6. Competence-based qualification system – continued

The system allows skills obtained in various settings to be demonstrated in tests independent of education. It is, therefore, designed to help maintain and enhance the professional skills of adults, to prepare students for self-employment, to develop working life, to promote employment and to support lifelong learning. The objective is that candidates are able to demonstrate required professional skills in a particular field. There are a number of ways of doing this:

- An assessment based on a portfolio.
- An assessment at the workplace, supplemented by written and oral interviews.
- An assessment at the educational institution which provides preparatory training and organises the test.
- A mixture of the above.

A qualification certificate is granted to a person who has passed all the modules required for the qualification. A request can be made to obtain a certificate for an individual module. Graduation can be recorded in a certificate of vocational skills approved by the NBE and used in a number of sectors, in particular those relating to technology. Qualifications do not automatically lead to specific wage levels, but this is developing to some extent in the construction and electrical sectors.

Accreditation of informally acquired competence is a growing preoccupation in all countries. Finland now has a mechanism to deal with this. When fully operational, a candidate should be able to attain a vocational qualification based solely on competence acquired informally. Experience so far indicates that in practice few people can attain qualifications exclusively on the basis of their informal learning. The majority of those who have taken the examination will have participated in some kind of preparatory training leading to the completion of modules. This system was designed to improve the attractiveness of vocational education and training, but will it contribute to everything becoming too vocationally oriented? Furthermore, some questions were raised during the visit about adverse consequences that might arise in the case of:

- People who are not able to finish a qualification.
- People attending those courses that do not give a qualification (non-certificate adult education).

In the Adult Education Centre of the City of Tampere students do not generally receive certificates. Diplomas are only given in particular courses, *e.g.* those run for the open university or specific language courses such as those within the framework of the Finnish national foreign language certificate. But, students in other courses would like some form of certification. They want it to show their employer, or to present at another school, or simply to build up a portfolio for themselves.

5.2 eLearning

Modern conveniences are attractive to most Finns. They want to be in the forefront in the development of eLearning, and this is being promoted by government in the Information Society Initiative. They are open about the fact eLearning is just in its infancy, but the Finns would like to be ahead in the area and to have an advantage in a few years down the line. Distance and virtual learning in Finland has always been popular and is justified on the basis of the sparse population living in a relative large land mass, with educational establishments well scattered throughout the country. Virtual studies are possible from the lower levels of comprehensive education (the virtual school) through to higher education. From the point of view of where and when to learn, these facilities have advantages for adults who could be attracted by the anonymity factor which is absent in contact education. As one expert in Karelia pointed out, adults are often embarrassed about showing their weaknesses in front of young people and would avoid classes in which groups are mixed.

Universities and educational establishments join forces in network-based education and research consortia to provide virtual services. Virtual developments will have the effect of integrating learning processes across different settings. The services of the national broadcasting company (YLE), have been indispensable in providing radio and television programmes for the open universities. The availability of digital broadcasting in the near future will be a big step forward in relation to the versatility of provision and in opening up online access to more homes through their television set. Many universities and polytechnics are making individual and joint inroads into developing the content and pedagogical approaches of the virtual university. They hope that it will increase numbers, but if it is done well it will also improve the service to existing students and enable institutions to exploit their own resources more. Much work is being done in the area of language courses. This could, for example, enable a college to get more students into language courses that are under-subscribed. Companies can be attracted to participate in eLearning projects because of their interest in software development, and in the content in order to adapt their applications for students or to adapt and tailor the content for their own staff.

Box 7. Virtuoso

Virtuoso is a project of the municipalities of North Karelia to develop a concept for eLearning for the region's upper secondary schools. It tries to represent the view of the region and capitalise on regional strengths. It involves the co-operation of about 300 teachers and a school population with ages varying between 16 and 65. The skill base of this population is lower than those at universities and polytechnics and this influences the type of virtual schooling to be developed. The main preoccupations thus far have been:

- How, when and why use eLearning at this level?
- What pedagogical support should be used?
- What kind of support does the teacher need to use eLearning in teaching?
- What are the different roles for the teacher?

So far the project has focused on the teacher's role:

- What can the teacher achieve alone and as part of a team?
- What teaching material already exists for the teacher and what must he/she create?

A pedagogical approach involving three roles for the teacher has been developed:

- The teacher-virtuoso, who works as a tutor and adviser in eLearning.
- The material-virtuoso, who has skills to produce materials to be used in eLearning.
- The support-virtuoso, who can offer support to colleagues working as material or teacher-virtuosos.

In developing these new opportunities, there is an assumption that digital literacy is universal. Finns in general have a high level of digital literacy, but is should not be forgotten that only 42% of households had PCs in 1999 (compared to an unweighted OECD average of 40%, OECD, 2001), even if the number is growing. Parjanen and Tuomi (2000) highlight the fact that, while experts in the ICT field are urging that the acquisition of digital literacy be made compulsory like reading and writing, the difficulties in the older age cohorts, regardless of social class, are comparable to the difficulties encountered by immigrants in learning a new language.

5.3 Learning at work

There is a tendency for employers to take external provision and the purchase of training for granted as normal practice. This could very easily lead to complacency about the value of the workplace as an intrinsic part of learning. In many modern work processes the two cannot be separated. The Finnish

researcher Engeström (1994) is the chief exponent of the theory of "expansive" learning, which he explains is not based on pre-defined content and tasks, but on a long-term process of re-defining the objects, tools and social structures of the workplace. This contextual learning is not only important to andragogy and cognitive psychologists, it has some very practical applications both for the adult and the employer. It can be organised as part of work and it can be to the benefit of all staff working in the particular context and not just the member who attends a training course. As many mentioned time and fatigue as reasons why people do not participate in learning, work-based learning is a way around that. In general, the value of work-based learning is appreciated in Finland, and this emerged in our discussions with practitioners, employers and administrators. S. Group (see Box 9.) and Metso emphasised using the workplace as a starting point for induction training, and bringing more learning into companies, based on what's already going on there in the context of daily work, such as teamwork and job rotation. They also develop workplace training for their employees to deal with major changes, *e.g.* company restructuring, introduction of new product lines and mergers.

This type of learning is of particular value in SMEs where time factors and lack of replacement personnel make it difficult for workers to participate in training. Due to time constraints in Joensuu, the review team did not have the opportunity to deal with the specific issues of skills needs and training in SMEs. The Ministry of Trade and Industry described its role as a consultant to assist SMEs and entrepreneurs. It can only reach 3-4% of the almost 220 000 SMEs in Finland. Most of the provision is provided on demand. A company asks for help and a programme plan is drawn up with the entrepreneur. Training in start-ups, management, marketing and accounting, development of services and ICT is given by 300-400 consultants. They are seldom from training institutions, but are normally involved in other types of companies and have experience of different kinds of business.

Finland has taken successful action on many of the guidelines on the National Action Plans for Employment. For the period 2002-01, the government and the social partners have agreed systematic and global measures to improve qualifications in SMEs and to develop self-employment and entrepreneurship. In keeping with the EU average, 98.8% of all companies are SMEs, but the number of entrepreneurs in Finland is lower than the EU average. The survival rate of new companies increased in the 1990s and the Entrepreneurship Project seeks to ensure their stable development and growth and to encourage new entrepreneurs. It will do this by developing their entrepreneurial skills of the adults who own and work in them. Training in competence development and issues related to corporate management, financing and running a business will be offered to them in their critical early years. Another aim is to increase the attractiveness of entrepreneurship as a career choice. From 2002 all educational establishments should take action to encourage entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship will be taken into account in the revision of national objectives for basic education, and teachers are also being trained for this new role. The basic vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification for entrepreneurs will be updated, and the potential of developing business competence training at universities and polytechnics will be studied. Apprenticeship training for entrepreneurs has increased and more opportunities will be given to entrepreneurs to train in their own companies. The project includes developing opportunities for SMEs to network and use ICT and e-commerce in their businesses, including the personnel development that these entails. A guidance service function to aid in locating companies in areas with skilled and trainable labour will also be developed for use in TE Centres (see also paragraph 132). They will also organise seminars to bring together regional actors to discuss promoting entrepreneurship in the regions (Ministry of Labour, 2001).

During the visit, the review team had many meetings with protagonists from the formal education sector. This reflects the reality of educational provision in Finland, which has traditionally been school-based. That not withstanding, learning in the workplace is a growth area. It is recognised in mainstream vocational education and training. Since the Act on Apprenticeship of 1992, apprenticeship is gaining in popularity. Accreditation and validation of this type of learning is taken into account in the competence-

based system. However, the overall intrinsic value of learning at work in its own right and the idea of the learning organisation as a *bona fide* learning environment could feature more prominently in policies. Policy makers should look at the potential of workplace pedagogy in the future development of adult education and training.

Box 8. Jollas Institute

The S Group is a co-operative with 23 members from the retail sector. The group's business covers food and groceries, special goods, department stores, hotels and restaurants, hardware and agriculture, automobiles and service stations. The group has its own sectoral adult vocational education centre, the Jollas Institute. Jollas provides training and coordinates training with providers for circa 23 000 of the group's workers throughout Finland.

Examples of training programmes include:

- Staff orientation.
- Management trainee courses for young professionals.
- Team training.
- Degree courses.
- Multimedia learning.
- International scholarships and study visits.

It places great store on close interaction between theory and practice, and the adaptation of knowledge to the trainee's own environment. Trainers from Jollas often go out to the various locations to give short courses. The student can also come to the institute but then only one person benefits. The average is 3 to 4 days training and management is the main area, which means that people at the top of the hierarchy get most training. But everyone gets some training. There is a trend to train those at all levels of the company hierarchy in response to competition from other international retailers setting up in Finland.

Web-based training is being developed and this is useful in this sector which has a high turnover of personnel, quickly changing products, and in which staff is dispersed throughout the country. Teacher mobility is the norm at Jollas. Teaching staff have four- to five-year contracts then they move on. Competence-based qualifications are implemented through apprenticeship training for group members, and Jollas also gives certificates for its own training.

5.4 Guidance services

The guidance services in North Karelia typify the services available in Finland outside the school system. The employment office, among its circa 50 staff, employs four psychologists and four information specialists. The service point is open to the public at large and offers information on study possibilities and financing, using written materials, databases and videos. It had 13 000 visitors in 2000. It also provides counselling for people looking for a job. The counsellors draw up a personal plan and investigate with the person what training may be required. The counsellor comments on the prospects of the person in employment and training.

Career guidance to help a person select training for a job is mainly psychological guidance. Personal guidance is open and free of charge, and available by appointment to the employed, the unemployed and people at school. It involves three to five visits with the psychologist and may include psychological and medical tests. Group guidance, five hours in five days, is also offered. Most unemployed are offered the support of a group in addition to personal guidance. Customers of career guidance services in 2000 were, 12% employed, 49% unemployed, and 39% other (*i.e.* students at school).

Evidence is also found in North Karelia that the adult vocational training centre tries to include guidance as an integral part of its teaching activities. In an ideal situation, they would like to have vocational training include skills for life as well as technical skills. The training process of older persons is curtailed because they may first have to acquire new learning skills and the process could take too long.

Given their means, the compromise is to offer elements of guidance embedded in training, *e.g.* orientation to studying, learning to learn, learning by doing. They start with an assessment of the person's present situation, competence and life management skills, and a personal study plan follows so that all subsequent planning is based on the actual situation of the person. Such opportunities seem to be the exception rather than rule. The general aim is that, during labour market training leading to a qualification or a part of qualification or in training preparing for them, the educational establishment draws up, together with the student, a personal study plan containing learning objectives including the date of the competence-based examination. When drawing up a personal study plan, earlier studies and skills acquired in one's previous working career must be taken into account. The progress of students and realisation of the plan must be monitored during training. If necessary, the study plan must be revised. These objectives have not yet been fully achieved, and the elaboration of personal study plans needs to be further developed.

Another need for guidance has been discovered at universities. After 10 years of study, 30% of students have not attained their degree and about 20% of higher education students still have not finished their degree after 30 years. The problem usually starts when it comes to preparing the thesis as only 5 to 10% do not finish their course work. Financial considerations are another reason for dropouts and there is a growing tendency for students to be attracted out by the prospect of work. The Compass, a study-counselling project is addressing these problems at Tampere University. The aim of the project is to develop functional study counselling from entry to exit, with the support of tutors, older students acting as study counsellors, helping to build up their self-confidence and their degree. Support from teaching staff for this activity is minimal.

5.5 New institutions emerging

Vocational Adult Education Centres (VAEC), like polytechnics, are seen to serve adults well. The introduction of a market ethos has increased the quality, as well as the quantity of supply, as each centre competes to provide the best service to municipalities, labour market authorities, employers and individuals. VAECs are a major supplier of job-related training to employers and self-directed learning opportunities. There are 48 nation-wide, 10 foundations, 6 limited companies, 1 association and 31 run by one or more municipalities. They are the results of a number of processes during the 1990s, which included new legislation, decentralisation of responsibility to the local authorities and privatisation. Privatisation has to be qualified with regard to adult education in Finland. It is partially market-driven in that institutions compete among themselves for customers and deregulation has occurred with regard to who provides what. But most of their funding comes from the public purse. They have full autonomy over curriculum and its development and they can gear this to the local market. The end result is that many types of adult education institutions and polytechnics, and to some extent universities, can compete against each other for customers, while all are responsible to the same municipality or group of municipalities, except universities. Even in cases where municipalities allow them to function as limited companies (see Box 10), their powers are formally limited. The question must be asked whether it is the role of the State to continue to subsidise forms of work-related adult education to such a degree, or should it be concentrating more on bringing the most needy groups in society into the learning net.

It is doubtful if this quasi-market can be sustained. If the national government wishes to promote full and fair competition, it should be diligent about threats to competition. Publicly-subsidised education providers, such as Adulta, have an inherent advantage in the marketplace. They are larger, more broadly-based and more experienced (*i.e.* it has economies of scale, scope, and learning) than any feasible new entrant to its market for educational services. They can use these advantages to restrict entry to their market. One way is to charge fees for certain programmes that do not recoup the costs of providing those programmes, in order to undercut competitors for those programmes. For example, Adulta faces little competition in some of its programmes that require large up-front investments in equipment and

machinery. New entrants, however, can more easily compete with Adulta in the provision of language courses, which require virtually no capital investment. If Adulta charges higher fees than it needs to in order to cover its costs in its technical courses (for which if faces no competition) in order to charge lower fees than it needs in order to cover its costs in other courses where it faces competition, it is practising predatory pricing.

Box 9. Adulta

Adulta is one of the six VAECs that function as limited companies. Founded in 1972, it is now owned by four municipalities in the Helsinki hinterland, serving an important metropolitan area in the affluent southern region of Finland. It is breaking new ground in entering the private sphere and is an example of innovative joint municipality-owned centres, combining resources to cater for local needs in four municipalities. It is a competitive and important player in the region, tailoring its services to the buoyant market in IT, languages, business, industrial training in metal work and construction which prevail in the area. In addition, it has tapped a growing sector in TV, film and media training, and will soon become the provider for YLE.

The pedagogical process employed reflects the framework of the competence-based qualification system. It emphasises the individual work plan, students' self-evaluation and accreditation of prior learning (APL). It is significant that no student has so far managed to go through the system on the basis of a portfolio and APL, experience has to be supplemented with study modules to fill the gaps in knowledge and the portfolio has to be combined with interviews. Students also give feedback on Adulta and their teachers.

Teachers are assessed annually and 80% have completed their pedagogical training. They are recruited mainly from working life and many still work part-time in local business and industry. Adulta also recognises the fact that full-time teachers also need to return to the workplace to renew their knowledge and competence, but this is not generally possible because of time constraints.

The energy of the centre is manifested in its creation of a media school. It has the support of the industry and special grants because of the expense of the equipment required. It also rents out its studio facilities when they are not in use for teaching. This provides income and also brings students close to the real world of production. Many of the target groups for this course are unemployed after many years in a competitive industry, or want to settle down to a more secure or indoors job following many years on the road with camera crews, musicians, etc. As time goes on, qualifications become more important and are a guarantee of security for those who may have left study prematurely to join these glamour industries.

This business-minded centre runs a highly commercial business. The cost of attaining a competence-based qualification can range from 30 000 to 110 000 FIM, including skill tests and assessment and tuition. Fees at the flourishing language department have been dropped in order to compete. They are now turning to eLearning services aimed at meeting the needs of companies. For the moment this is a reallocation of funds rather than a saving, but in the long term it may be more cost effective than contact learning. The National Board of Education (NBE) is providing VEACs with 50% of the funding to develop eLearning, as part of the Information Society Initiative.

5.6 Practitioners

Real life experience both for students and teachers is held in high esteem, as part of polytechnics' and adult vocational centres' teaching policy. Many of the staff members come from working life to teach, and complete a teaching diploma within 3 years in order to retain their job and gain professional status. Part-time teaching and working in the field is also encouraged. Pedagogy is valued and a high percentage of teachers opt for pedagogical training. Like Adulta, the Adult Education Centre of the City of Tampere considers its 200 teachers as the key to their success because they have the closest contact with the students. Didactic and other courses are arranged for them annually.

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Box 10. Häme teacher training college

The teacher training facility at Häme Polytechnic is an example of a modern teacher training centre, with good facilities tailored to their teaching philosophy, and flexible programmes suited to student teachers of all ages. Häme trains vocational teachers, most of them specialising in a wide variety of sectors. It also trains teachers in languages, mathematics, physics and chemistry, physical education and health, arts and culture. Similar to other students, trainee teachers have a personal study plan.

Full-time students follow six contact periods in the college and four periods at a distance. Developing problem-solving skills at the learning laboratory in an important element of the training. Students in the multimode programme do their teacher training alongside their work, either as a teacher or in unrelated fields. The objective of most of the latter group is to become trainers in their present workplace or later to become teachers in educational institutions. Training for counselling practitioners and special education teachers is also provided. Additionally, a one and a half year course for driving instructors is part of Häme's activities.

The attention paid to this important issue of teacher training is noteworthy. For countries facing the problem of shortages in the teaching profession, much can be learned from Finland on recruiting and recycling subject experts from the workplace to the teaching profession.

The integration and mainstreaming of adult education and training has to a large extent meant that formal institutions are the mainstay in developing pedagogy and quality learning provision. However, this must be qualified by underlining that the competence-based vocational qualification system recognises and accreditates learning, based on its outcomes, no matter what its provenance. This system provides synergy in Finnish vocational education and training (VET). It acts as a national currency in qualifications that has cracked the nut of finding a balance between providing a very open system, embracing all types of formal and informal learning, while safeguarding quality by setting standards that are nationally recognised and accepted by all. It gives students maximum job prospects and a skill base to build on, as initial qualifications can be followed up by further or specialised qualifications, and it meets employers' needs. A lot can be learned from this by other countries striving to develop national qualifications frameworks, where quality assurance is often found to be a problem.

A flaw in the system, which promotes equality of educational opportunities for everyone, is that it does not take into account the fact that everyone does not act and think the same with regard to these opportunities. There is a substantial minority who is not motivated to take up current offers of education or training. But, with the emphasis on freedom of choice, no measures are being taken to entice or oblige these people to enter the learning net.

Pedagogy, as well as learning opportunities, tends to focus on the most able in society. It is aimed at individuals who can keep up and do not need special attention. Many providers say they can not cope with atypical (problem) student groups. Although real life experience is valued, not enough places exist in companies to provide work-based experience for the unemployed most removed from the world of work. The long-term unemployed, in particular, would benefit from a workplace setting for learning. Subsidised jobs are mostly in the public sector, as private firms would have to offer a post to any unemployed person taken on. This rule should be reconsidered, as it is a barrier to increasing the number of places available for work experience. The uptake of job rotation is low in Finland and where is does exist it is also mainly in the public sector. Even in labour market training, there is no active policy to oblige participation, such as workfare arrangements. There is a strong lobby who disapproves of policies that coerce people into learning for economic reasons.

6. WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ASSURE POLICY COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS?

6.1 Developing a holistic approach

Reforms throughout the 1990s were aimed at improving the cohesion and performance of the education system. They have involved bringing authorities, providers, teachers, students and employers closer. Notable examples of the success achieved are the role of the joint municipalities in education or the co-operation between authorities, practitioners and the social partners to create the competence-based vocational qualification framework. From the point of view of supply, there is an attempt to create an education market in which these same actors should compete. Expectations in terms of co-operation among education providers should be revised downwards if competition is promoted. Policy cannot go both ways simultaneously. Increased competition and/or decentralisation could be beneficial to efficiency and the adequacy of programmes to meet local or individual needs, but it generally comes at a certain cost in terms of collaboration, fixed-cost sharing, etc.

Support systems exist as part of overall welfare state policy, independently of education systems, *e.g.* crèches, health and social services, and transport. They are an essential part of the overall infrastructure for making the system successful. Today, it is not just a question of adequate support systems. All these services impact on each other and must be planned as part of a whole. Finland has examples of holistic policy approaches applied in other areas. The Information Society Initiative is mobilising many ministries and bodies throughout the country with positive results. In the case of the National Action Plan for Employment (NAP), various ministries co-operate efficiently with the Ministry of Labour to implement the European Union's annual guidelines on employment. In the area of adult education, a holistic approach incorporating many sectors and ministries is also necessary.

- Interaction and links exists between initial education policy, further education policy, labour market and social security (pensions) policy and they need to be treated appropriately. For example, employer representatives believe that future qualification trends will require 50% of the future workforce to have higher education degrees (labour market requirement). To achieve this, more places for university students are needed as well as in the developing polytechnic sector. The current system of *numerus clausus* limits access to those who pass the matriculation exam. Having passed this exam, an individual has the right to his/her place at university for the rest of his/her life (trait of the current initial education policy). Because of the difficult entry requirements, many students/young adults attend the open university as a means of transferring to university (further education reality), and take part-time jobs that could be occupied by older people currently pre-pensioned (social security problem).
- Finland is beginning to experience skills gaps and labour shortages. Some reflection needs to be given at the policy level to preparing a coherent strategy to deal with this problem. This would involve co-ordination of education and training policy to encourage skill renewal, employment policy, especially taxation and pension schemes to encourage people to work longer, and immigration policy and the assimilation of foreign workers into the labour force.

6.2 Policy to cater for those most in need

The goals of the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education differ. The former is close to enterprise needs, while the latter has a more universal policy. After the introduction of the customer-provider model, the division of tasks and roles of both have started to overlap because they are both paying the same actors for the same services and courses for adults. The only difference is that the Ministry of

Labour is responsible only for the unemployed. It seems that parliamentarians would like one flexible administration to deal with both.

Universal and free-of-charge provision is not sufficient to ensure the participation of all segments of the population. Some initiatives should be taken to address the special needs of low-educated and remotely located people. For a start, the trap of unemployment combined with no training possibilities should disappear and active employment prospects beyond the age of 50 should be made more credible to current middle-aged workers. The Background Report points out that unemployment is related to educational level (Heinonen, 2001). The committee on adult education appointed by the Ministry of Education recommended in 1975 that government target funds for initial vocational training for adults with only primary education. This would be a worthy target to revitalise, extending it to all those with only compulsory education.

6.3 The role of the social partners

Co-operation between the social partners in Finland takes place in a very balanced way. Their role in education and training is now taken for granted, so much so that the outside observer can be almost unaware of it. However, since the 1970s when adult vocational education became an issue for collective bargaining, all education and training issues are submitted for tripartite negotiations (Heinonen, 2001), and agreements are drawn up for set periods (see Box 12). For example, the framework for the competence-based qualification system and the content of each of the qualifications was worked out in detail with the social partners. Increased involvement of the social partners and their specific interest in working life may be one reason why the vocational side of adult learning appears to currently dominate.

Rapid structural change in Finland meant that employers had to turn their attention to training of their workers in order to survive. These changes, combined with the recession, necessitated much training on the part of employers, in addition to the intensive labour market training initiated by the Ministry of Labour to alleviate unemployment. An economy based 70% on forestry and natural resources (wood and pulp) has re-emerged now with 30% dependence on forestry, 30% on the metal sector and 30% on the electronics sector. In 1993, enterprises allocated 2% of their expenditure to training, the figure is now 5%. However, huge differences exist between sectors and companies. Sectoral bargaining and education and training activities at the level of individual sectors could be encouraged. The Siikaranta Trade Union College is a small example of a trade union offering comprehensive education to workers in the construction industry.

Box 11. Annex to 2000 tripartite agreement

The latest tripartite negotiations concluded in November 2000. The social partners provided an annex to the agreement entitled *Lifelong learning as part of working life*, which is summarised below.

An ageing population and decreasing numbers of young skilled workers, coupled with increasing demands for new skills among the workforce, means that skill development of employees must be assured throughout working life. Maintaining and developing their skills is a responsibility to be shared by individuals, employers and the Government. Government has a duty to provide high-class foundation learning and skills and it should make a special input to redress the insufficient general education level of the middle-aged population. Employers are responsible for training plans and in-house training, while individuals have their own responsibility for their personal skill development. Companies' annual planning should pay attention to annual and mid-term anticipation of skills in order to secure the availability of a skilled workforce. The social partners, therefore, propose the following measures to promote vocational education and training:

- The budget for additional vocational training should be maintained at its 2000 level in 2001 and increased in future years.
- Joint examination shall be undertaken by the social partners and the Government (ministries responsible) of the variations of supply and cost of self-directed further training at different levels and in different branches
- Legislation concerning self-directed learning for the unemployed should remove the stipulation requiring participants to have spent 15 years in employment (action has since been taken).
- Before the law on adult training benefit comes into force on 1 August 2001, negotiation on its simplification and clarification should by concluded by 31 May 2001, otherwise existing benefits and grants for competence-based qualifications should be continued until 31 July 2003. Likewise, before the third phase of the training insurance, affecting persons in employment comes into force on the same date, the Government should commence a study on how taxation of additional voluntary insurance will be handled.
- Increased funding to universities in future budgets to reduce teacher/student ratios and to provide facilities and equipment is necessary.
- Parties to the collective agreements not yet participating in on-the-job learning contracts are recommended to do so.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's initiative to regulate social insurance of trainees during on-the-job placements is supported.
- Employees with no vocational qualification who undertake apprenticeship training should not be subject to the quota system (the document suggests that 50% of 40-55 year-olds do not have a vocational qualification). The Ministry of Education should set-up a working group to study the quota system.
- Special measures should be taken to promote the competence-based qualification system.
- Government should study how AMK institutions have used alternative work-related training models, based on work contracts and closely integrated into working life, and propose trial apprenticeships at tertiary level in the commerce, administration, transformation and ICT sectors.
- A joint project should be initiated to raise the level of VET, particularly at upper secondary level, as companies will in future require 50% of employees to have a vocational education qualification at this level.

6.4 Shared funding and responsibilities

Policy in the 1990s has been to develop a market approach in adult education. However, there is not yet a free market economy in the field. The public authorities still have a strong hand in running adult education provision. But employers in general are satisfied with the standard of qualified workers they are provided with and, perhaps for this reason, are happy to let local authorities take the lead in providing services. However, rapid expansion of vocational programmes to the "private" benefit of relatively privileged individuals and firms calls into question the absolute necessity of relying primarily on public money to fund all adult education programmes. Higher private contributions for some vocational programmes could release budgets for "at risk" groups. An alternative to private contribution could be some kind mutual sharing of training costs organised by the social partners.

When it comes to financing, a more global framework programme for youth and adults is called for to balance the needs of both groups fairly, so that no large cuts are made in one segment to pay for another, as seems to have happened in the current financial year with pre-school provision and additional

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vocational training. Various funding methods with more shared contributions should be explored for the future in order to compensate for depreciating public spending and to make funds available for special provision. Some countries have levy systems or sectoral funding arrangements. More recently, individual learning accounts (ILA) are being given serious consideration as a means of enabling employees save towards their future learning needs, with support from the State and employers, in much the same way as one contributes to pension funds.

While primarily committed to the productivity of their business and remaining competitive, employers do have an important role to play in ensuring that training provision and content are the best that can be achieved in order to fulfil their own future requirements and the collective needs of the knowledge society. The level of skill demanded in the workplace is increasing all-round. Industries which previously provided opportunities for less skilled workers, such as construction, now employ highly skilled professionals. Not surprisingly, employers prefer to take on young people with recently attained qualifications, at lower wages, than older people. The position of the older person is further weakened by the risk the employer has to take of having to pay his/her pension early, should he/she suffer illness. There is, therefore, a gap in the market for new forms of low-skilled jobs and occupations suitable for those who would like to leave the labour market more gradually. Some such jobs, as mentioned above, are occupied by students. Opening up the current regime in higher education would free some of these jobs and give students the financial means and time to concentrate on their studies.

Employers pay high taxes and have entitlements, such as good foundation education. But they also benefit indirectly from other public supply, *e.g.* study grants, education and training guarantee, and the array of support systems available currently (Heinonen, 2001). Redirecting some of this funding towards the low-skilled and older workers should be considered. If enough young people are not coming into the labour market, then government must ensure that older workers are prepared and their competence developed to remain longer in working life. Taxation and pension schemes should be adjusted to remove any barriers which hinder workers staying on longer in employment, and rather provide enticements to do so and also to develop their skills to make this possible. For example, tax relief might be offered to companies which provide employment and training opportunities for older workers, much in the same way as the system works for youth apprenticeships. Similarly, the job rotation scheme, which is currently undersubscribed to, might be encouraged, also with State assistance, to provide a mechanism for more employees to pursue self-directed learning and to give more unemployed access to first-hand job-related training and work experience.

6.5 Universities

Currently, universities are funded directly by the State, based on the number of students enrolled. The Ministry of Education funding covers some 65% of their overall funding. External funding is channelled through the state budget in the form of research funding, for example, through the Academy of Finland and TEKES, the National Technology Agency. Allocation is largely determined on the basis of degree objectives and completed degrees. Department do not get money for their dropouts. Although the budget has been raised by FIM 1 billion in recent years, this has not kept pace with increasing demands for resources because of rising costs, growing intakes, expanding services, ICT-supported development and provision, etc. and universities have had to respond by starting to raise more money from the sale of services. To date, private funding proper totals circa 6%; most of it is allocated to research. Thus, higher education in Finland is becoming more market-oriented than other sectors of education. Particularly, there is a large expansion and development of extension courses in continuing professional education, which are changing from short just-in-time courses to longer programmes of up to three years. However, this tendency is a worry for college rectors who would like more energy to be spent in research than going out winning contracts and students. In the latest collective agreement between the social partners and the

government, the social partners called for attention in future budgets to the problem of resources for universities in terms of students costs, infrastructure, equipment and student-teacher ratios.

The Finnish university system is held in high esteem internationally. In 1996, the Finnish Higher Educatoin Evaluation Council was set up to regularly evaluate universities and other higher education institutions. Operationally, it is characterised by closed, highly-selective entrance requirements, based on *numerus clausus*, and lengthy stays of students at college. In Tampere university only 16% of applicants gain access. This could prove to be a great barrier in the effort to meet both the estimated future qualification trends which indicate that 50% of the future workforce will require higher education degrees and the Government's target that 70% of the relevant age cohort should pursue higher education by 2004. It seems well set to achieve this. Finnish students now have the right to their place at university for the rest of their life, and 60% of the cohort completing upper secondary education favour the "year-out model", which introduces a certain recurrent education into their study model (Parjanen and Tuomi, 2000). Nevertheless, students remain at university longer than they need to. In the meantime, in order to pay for food and rent, some work at low-skilled jobs while they, unhappily and unfortunately, delay their entry into the labour market for professionals and stretch out the duration of their low-income student careers. Lying in sad juxtaposition are many low-skilled older workers who could easily manage such employment but who, instead, must settle for lives of unemployment and such income as the state can provide. Something needs to be done about getting students to finish more quickly. If professors somehow benefit from restricting the number of regular slots and force those students into adult education or if they are largely responsible for dragging out the students' stays by not reading their theses or not paying attention to them or not giving clear instructions, this needs to be investigated and the Finnish people have the right to know its results.

There is no autonomous open-university establishment in Finland, rather it was realised as a study system based on co-operation with colleges. Every higher education institution, including the polytechnics, provide their own open learning opportunities, corresponding to studies they offer. Over 60 different subjects are available and only a few very technical options are not offered in this way. Open university education is generally organised by the centres for extension studies which are separate departments of universities. Over half of the open university education is organised by the universities themselves. The rest is organised in co-operation with some 500 organisations. The co-operating adult education organisations are mainly summer universities, adult education centres, folk high schools and vocational schools. All open university study is part-time with teaching in the evening and at weekends.

Humanities and education are the most popular fields. These courses are co-financed by the state and the participants. In keeping with the objectives of equality in education the fees required from students must be moderate. By law open university teaching is to be offered at cost prices (http://www.avoinyliopisto.fi/english/).

The open university is open to all, regardless of age and educational background. Most of the students study to improve their general education or professional skills. In the majority of cases younger students aim at a university degree. Because of the existing difficult entry requirements to regular universities, many students/young adults attend the open university as a means of accumulating credits which they hope will transfer to their intended university programme later. Assess to degree studies at university can be granted on completion of approximately one-third of a degree in the open university. 50% of student are under 30 years, and half of these are under 25 years. There are very fewer 'real' adults seeking a second chance in the open universities now. In fact the initial education students may discourage some older adults from joining those courses, although they are funded with adult education money. Overall, the proportion of students coming from the open university to university is still quite small, 2.6% annually (Parjanen and Tuomi, 2000).

It would also appear that the university system is failing to meet students' needs to the best of its ability. In a time when the reality of more than one degree or period of study is becoming the norm, the current situation is not optimal for the student or society. The average student is quite old when completing his/her initial degree and with study support being limited to 55 months or less students are discouraged from acquiring a second degree. Others are lured out by the labour market without finishing their studies. About half the engineers do not qualify. Suikkanen (2000) feels that 'the flexibility and adaptiveness of people is increasing at a conspicuously faster rate than the reproduction of socio-political forms and measures to meet present conditions'. This model does not fit into the existing patterns and mechanisms for student support and financing. A pragmatic solution would be to develop a loan programme to pay for students' tuition in advanced degree programmes (and perhaps in initial university programmes as well, since very few students presently use the only available bank loans). These loan programmes can be structured on an equitable basis by having graduates pay back their loans as percentages of their income rather than in fixed amounts. That way those who benefit most from their advanced training pay the most back. Using the education insurance scheme could also be looked at.

Universities have traditionally focused on the more traditional branches of higher education, their strengths lying in pure and social sciences, and research. However, now that a strong need for new forms of workplace knowledge and professional skills has emerged, additional higher education programmes with workplace-relevant content are needed. Work-learning arrangements, such as higher education apprenticeships could reduce the amount of time spent solely on studies and prepare students to enter the labour market better equipped.

Universities are crucial not only to education but also to the development and growth of local regions and industrial sectors. They engage in courses, projects and research based on the needs of their hinterland. However, problems exist for universities located in more remote areas. People move to the more populated centres where they have more alternatives to choose from. Moreover, regional and socio-economic background plays a significant role in one's chances of getting into university (Parjanen and Tuomi, 2000). The use of new learning environments, using Internet and eLearning, will also have effects on student behaviour when selecting university courses. This will mean that universities in remote areas are competing more keenly than ever, even for students in their own catchment area who will have access to courses in the bigger universities through distance learning.

6.6 Effect of Pension schemes

OECD (2000*b*) remarks on new reforms which are trying to coax more people to stay on longer in employment but says they need to go further. The pension system and other social programmes which are encouraging withdrawal from the labour market before the age of 65 have to be amended, particularly the earnings-related pension scheme, which has a ceiling of 60% maturity and does not encourage working after the age of 61 years. The national pension scheme also discriminates against the employed who pay a premium of 4.7% after the age of 54, while the unemployed and early retired are exempt from the premium, although they accrue rights. On the contrary, methods such as tax incentives should be put in place to encourage rather than deter these people from continuing to work and learn.

From a purely social point of view, now that people are living longer and can enjoy a healthy old age, they should be provided with education services to help them adjust and start out on the new stage of their lives. A growing percentage of the population is in the older age group, and they need to learn to cope in their old age with the changing environment around them. In 1978, 11.5% Finns were 65 years and older. In 1998 the number had risen to 14.7% (OECD, 1999).

6.7 *More evaluation in order to understand the problems*

Policy makers should have a deeper understanding of the learning needs of all groups. The disadvantaged — low-skilled, ageing and unemployed —are simply not included in the equation. For now, the economy is comfortable enough to pay for these people to remain inactive. There is a lot of provision where people are not exposed to market failure, but where they are so exposed no provider is involved. There is a need to find out who they are and why they are not in the system. The review team felt during the visit that needs of companies and their employees were being well catered for. However, researchers cast doubt on this assumption, maintaining that there was a lack of interest in finding out exactly what is needed. Very often administrators rely on hunches. More research would be justified on investigating all adults' learning needs, as well as the cost and results of adult learning.

Existing evaluation procedures neither address nor assist co-ordination. Evaluation is carried out systematically on each type of institution and how they are performing. This causes problems when one tries to look at coherence between the different parts of the system and how the various parts gel together. This is particularly important in Finland where many different types of institution are competing to provide education for adults. Future data sets should identify students, not only by age, but also by whether they are pursuing initial or further studies. Another consequence of evaluation by category is the lack of research on how adults in general prefer to learn. The labour market authorities have done research on the long-term unemployed and found that only 15% are interested in learning. But the research did not probe to find out what it would take to change these attitudes or under what circumstances these same people might be motivated to participate in some kind of learning activity.

Quality control in adult education has been based on student evaluation - the number of students who pass exams or gain job placement or credentials. With no new sources of funding coming from the public coffers and pressure to shift resources to polytechnics, quality is now of paramount importance. At municipal level, evaluation is obligatory since 1999, both of the providers and what they provide. Local authorities are also obliged by law to evaluate and set targets. A system is not yet in place. Local authorities want to include it as part of the overall evaluation of their services. The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is offering municipalities advice and know-how on different ways of proceeding.

Many changes and improvements have been introduced in the last decade that still need time to mature. Some are now being assessed for the first time. Initial evaluation of the competence-based vocational qualification system is positive and could have a far-reaching impact.

6.8 *Regional Disparities*

Twenty years ago the differences between the regions were smaller. There was a very strong regional policy at central level. Now frameworks have been set-up in each region and it is a case of each one fending for itself and support measures do not exist to the same extent. The poorest regions are trying to survive on a minimum State subvention, while richer ones get richer. There is a need to create more coherence between the regions and to target the most needy regions. Currently, there is no national body to oversee and co-ordinate them. Especially in terms of ensuring more equitable distribution of funds, it would be desirable to create one. Regional disparity in Finland has increased due to the meteoric rise of its ICT sector on the world stage and the gravitation in the late 1990s of people and investment to those areas where it is located, during the recovery from the last recession. This has still to be recognised as a major issue by the Finns.

It is difficult to focus on adult education policy without taking the broader economic and social context into account. Although government did not make a conscious decision to give priority to the southern region, this is what is happening because of the way the economy is developing around ICT and related industries based in the south. Apart from a brief upturn in the late 1970s, unemployment was below average and had not been a problem in Finland (OECD, 1999). Since the recession in the 1990s, the situation has remained grave in many regions. While in Helsinki labour shortages will soon be a reality, the overall unemployment rate is still over 9% (9.4% in January 2001, Eurostat). The area of Tampere has a rate of 16%, and in Karelia it is 19% and decreasing at a rate of only 1% per annum. In addition, there is a population drift south to areas where there are more jobs. This means that regions such as Karelia and Lapland have the triple problem of unemployment, and a population that is ageing and declining. There is also rural-urban migration within the regions themselves. The age structure is changing especially in rural areas with more people dying than being born. Finns appreciate these areas for their recreational value and would not like to see them decline. One European Union Interreg-Tacis project being currently funded in the Eastern region treats the idea of "developing silence as a product".

In Karelia, regional and local agents and bodies have a strong sense of collaboration to ensure that the development needs of communities and the region as a whole are met. Adult education and training are part of this scenario. The Provincial State Office Department for Education and Culture is developing additional vocational training in growth areas. In 2000, over 42% of this type of training was concentrated in electronics, ICT and health, social and environment courses, an increase from 1999 when these branches made up circa 30% of additional vocational training. The TE centres support training for the adult workforce, entrepreneurship, and technical development within companies in general, while the University of Joensuu is running studies in Commercial and Regional Development. This effective regional co-operation is reflected in how EU Structural Funds[6] are applied for and spent in Eastern Finland. Finland receives the equivalent of 1% of GDP from the EU Structural Funds annually. This boosts the eastern and northern regions but it cannot replace national investment. It does, however, provide a platform for co-operation among these regional bodies (see Box 13).

6. The Structural Funds comprise the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Agricultural Guidance Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and Financial Instrument of Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

Box 12. EU-supported activity in Eastern Finland

The profile of Eastern Finland is typical of what the EU terms 'less-favoured regions', which are targeted for special financing under Objective[7] 1 of the Structural Funds. It is geographically remote and has high transportation and communication costs. The population is sparse and there is a lack of certain skills, a problem which is accentuated by migration of well-educated people to the south. The regional economy is one-sided, relying heavily on local resources and public sector employment, and this has led to structural unemployment. The private sector and entrepreneurial culture are weak in the region.

For the period 2000-2006, a draft programme was prepared in the region by a wide partnership, starting in Autumn 1997. It was further negotiated at national and EU level before being adopted by the European Commission in January 2000. The programme aims to create employment, reduce unemployment, slow population outflow, and develop the region as an internationally competitive player. This will be achieved through modernisation and diversification of the economy, based on the development of skills and technology. Projects financed under the programme will give particular attention to the environment, equality of opportunities, rural development, entrepreneurship and support to small companies, and developing the Information Society. Some of this money, particularly ESF funding, can be directed at developing education and training. In Karelia, much of the funding is used to develop training systems and to raise the level of skill and know-how of the labour force. The programme has four priorities: 1) business development is allocated EUR 219 million (34.9% of total EU funding); 2) knowledge and technology has EUR180 million (28.9%); 3) rural development has EUR130 million (20.7% EU); and 4) infrastructure receives EUR88 million (14.0% EU).

Eastern Finland also benefits from Interreg (financed by the ESF), an EU programme that aids cross-border co-operation between regions in neighbouring countries. North Karelia is the most easterly region in Finland, and in the EU, and extends to the north in the regions of Kainuu and Northern Ostrobothnia. These three regions of Eastern Finland are in a unique location on the border between the EU and the Karelian Republic of Russia. The Interreg II programme between the four regions, which ended in 2000, generated a new form of regional co-operation between Russia and the EU. About half of the projects supported directly involved business activities. Efforts were made to increase awareness of Russian business culture, commercial legislation, administration, and many projects included Russian language courses. Karelia Interreg activities improved mobility between the two countries and encouraged visits and exchanges based on their common culture. As well as projects related to companies' operating conditions, industrial production, tourism, rural development, environmental collaboration, etc., one section was devoted to education and research and development. For example, the Northern Karelia AMK institute led a project with Joensuu University Library, Petrozavodsk University Library, Itäinnova and the Northern Karelia Chamber of Commerce to improve the provision of data services in Karelia and Russia. The main result was a set of Internet materials on Russia and Russian Karelia, available via the Internet in the database *Ruska – the Russian/Karelian Virtual Library*.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment are being promoted, particularly in regions where there are no big industries, and this is enabled by strong educational services in the regions. Under the regional plans and priorities, in the multi-annual National Development Programme, 2000-2006, drawn up for the purpose of obtaining EU funds, attention is being given to developing the Information Society and to entrepreneurship and support to small companies to help them internationalise. The regions are also encouraged to draw up their own regional plans in the framework of the National Actions Plans for Employment, in which entrepreneurship is one of the four pillars. The TE Centres in the regions are responsible for co-ordinating EU funding and activities, and their industry departments organise services to companies and training and development for SMEs. Much of their work with SMEs consists of projects co-financed through the European Social Fund. TE Centres provide a service point offering companies and potential entrepreneurs support and advice under one roof. They specialise in advice to the self-employed on setting up and running a business, what this entails and possible niches, support to SMEs at different stages of their life-cycle, further and technical development of companies, advice on financial, business and management matters. Their task is also to design new policies to train the adult workforce and arrange for training in many of these areas.

Because of discrepancies in relation to population and the size of the regions, the so-called education market is only feasible in the Southwest region, where resources and density of population make it possible. In much of the eastern and northern regions, municipalities strive to provide the mandatory

7. The Objective 3 programme is financially the largest programme and applies to all Finland, Objective 2 is designed for regions with structural difficulties, there are two in Finland, in one in Western and one in Southern Finland.

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educational institutions. Despite regional autonomy, the budget is allocated centrally. Part of it is redirected to the municipalities where it is in turn distributed to the schools, and part is distributed directly to the schools. One might argue for this arrangement on equity grounds if money from rich areas was being redistributed to poor areas, but exactly the opposite seems to be happening. Because the budget is allocated from Helsinki, in liberal adult education for example, those in less well off regions, who are not so interested in purely recreational courses, are paying taxes for the middle class in the south to engage in recreational pursuits.

At the regional level itself, the experience of co-operation between municipalities provides promising results. The model of municipalities sharing resources and creating joint initiatives is effective in municipalities with small populations or less wealthy municipalities that have problems providing a full range of services. Also, a small experiment described in Joensuu shows how advancements in ICT training can be made with modest investment, even in less advantaged areas, and could perhaps be developed more widely. It is a true example of community self-help, drawing on locally available resources as educational facilities. It offers an alternative to educational institutions in a community centre or library in the learner's own environment. A tutor is provided, thus creating employment at the same time for an unemployed person with ICT skills. It is also a service to those without access to a computer at home. However, there is an underlying assumption that even older people can and will use the Web.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises some of the main observations of the team on adult learning in Finland, its strengths, weaknesses and problematic areas, and challenges to be dealt with. The latter will be followed by some recommendations on improving certain areas.

7.1 Strengths of the system

In general, participation in education and training is high in Finland and it can be commended on having adopted a culture of learning. Learning is held in high esteem by the population. In comparison to OECD averages, Finland scores highly on almost all fronts. The authorities are happy with the situation and keep an eye firmly on their international ranking. Lessons have been learnt from the recession of the early 1990s and there is a strong will to prevent its recurrence. Employers are also satisfied with basic education and training of young people entering the labour market. Moreover the state provides adequate support services (crèches, transport, etc.) to encourage participation and facilitate adult learning.

Although Finland relies heavily on state support and funding of adult vocational education, since the 1990s a regulated market is contributing to competition and an increased emphasis on quality.

Adult training in general, and labour market training in particular, is very focused on the immediate needs in the area and has strong links with employers. The social partners and practitioners play an active role in developing the system.

Another point to be viewed positively is the emphasis on personalised services in adult learning achieved through drawing up individual study plans, the modularization of courses which enables more tailoring to the needs of each individual, credit transfer and the provision of skill tests.

There are two especially successful practices which could provide a model for other countries. First, the competence-based qualification system, which is now well established and is highly regarded for giving national currency to vocational qualifications, both at upper secondary and further education level.

The competence-based qualification system enables the accreditation of prior learning and recognition of informal learning and the qualifications it provides are greatly sought after by employers.

Secondly, Finland appears to enjoy a smoothly run system of teacher training and recruitment. Quite often, teachers of adults continue be employed part-time in their own professional field which reinforces their up-to-date knowledge and brings training as close as possible to work.

7.2 The challenges to be met

The thematic review is entitled "adult learning", but during almost all the visits the discussion concentrated on adult vocational education, work-related learning and on the value of learning from a career/job perspective. Even the University Department visited at Tampere was dealing with continuing professional development. In keeping with their new role, the selling point emphasised by the polytechnic was its ability to fill the niche of higher vocational qualifications, particularly in the expanding technology sector. However, it may be added that the programme probably mirrors government policy of promoting strong links with the needs of business and industry.

A major challenge for the future is to promote learning for employability, mobility and adjustment in a knowledge economy, while at the same time developing social cohesion. Given recent developments in Finland and the one-sided growth of sectors such as electronics, the right balance should be found between developing training in high tech industries and large firms and promoting learning opportunities in traditional/low tech industries and SMEs.

The competence-based system for vocational qualifications is proving very successful. Moreover, because of the importance such qualifications now carry, there is a risk for people who do courses that do not fit into competence-based qualifications system. This system naturally emphasises vocationally-oriented courses and technical competencies. The liberal adult education sector has yet to find its footing in this context. Attention should be given to preserving the strong adult liberal education tradition, though not at the expense of competence building for marginalised groups. Amidst the many efforts to value and validate learning, not only in Finland, space must be left for informal learning for personnel fulfilment. Those who profit from it should contribute to its upkeep and development. The influence of the voluntary sector is negligible due mainly to the traditionally held view that the State should provide and the fact that civil society is very close to the State in Finland. However, the idea that civil organisations have a role to play, especially in lifelong learning, is taking root and must be developed.

Some of what was originally intended to be adult education and training is becoming the domain of all age groups, which is to be expected as more bridging and flexibility is developed in existing pathways. It would be good to see this resulting in more intergenerational learning. But, care must be taken not to discourage older learners whose level of qualification is lowest from joining courses which are dominated by youth.

While 6% have never participated, 34% of the adult population see no need for education and training. This situation is not helped by the fact that policy has favoured mainstreaming, self-initiative and self-directed learning. The authorities have been slow to single out or target specific groups for action. In the same way, guidance and counselling services, although adequately provided to those who seek it, have not reached out to those who need it most. Figuring out how to deal with the long-term unemployed and older people should be considered a prudent investment in the future, as the labour force will likely include a larger proportion of older workers and more immigrants.

Less than one-half of the unemployed get training opportunities. At the same time not all alternative offers of assistance are taken up, for example, the first phase of the education and training

insurance programme, aimed specifically at giving the unemployed the opportunity of longer study periods of one year of more, estimated a total participation of 16 000 but only 2 000 availed of it. The entitlement on its own is not enough, effective outreach activities including periods of learning are needed to accompany it.

The growing older age group in society has to receive special attention, both to ensure that they remain active participants in society and that their knowledge and experience of working life is not prematurely dispensed with through early exit from employment.

Significant numbers of university students take too long to complete their university studies. Thus, their entry to the labour market is delayed. Neither the students themselves, society, employers, nor the economy in general benefit from this situation. So far, the only action taken to correct this problem has focused on the students. But the students represent only half the relationship. The review team learned of no efforts to get professors, who, after all, are the ones most in control of the delays, to change their ways and speed up the process from their end. On the other side of the coin, there is no strong tradition of mature adults entering university later in life. Future demands for higher qualifications in the workforce and the promotion of lifelong learning require a much more varied mix of students at Finnish universities and in higher education in general.

Regional divide is an important issue in Finland, not least because the rich Southwest area attracts most of the business and the population. Population decline is still a problem in the north and east of the country. There are fewer educational services and resources for adult learners in the more isolated and less developed areas, but central government does not consider these problems when allocating the budget to the regions. The poorer regions are not, therefore, being subsidised or helped to improve their situation.

The questioning of financing is a thorny one. Traditionally, ample money has been available to subsidise much of adult education and training. The budget is now decreasing in real terms, but demand is increasing. The idea of each actor sharing the responsibility for training is slow to gain acceptance, despite growing problems of funding.

Unfortunately, the review team had a meeting with this Parliamentary Committee on the first day of our visit, before the views of many of the main actors in adult education were noted. If the Committee meeting had been at the end, the line of questioning would certainly have changed. The main question would then have been why, when considering legislation on financing adult VET, they allowed the budget to be cut for the fifth year running? At the same time, if they consider voluntary or self-motivated VET as a growing sector, who should then pay? The individual? The company? Both sharing along with the State?

In order to identify the true extent of adult participation, statistics and research in the future must try to differentiate between those who are still pursuing initial education or training, either at secondary or tertiary level, and those following up their initial studies with supplementary or further education and training. Statistics and surveys should also delve deeper into the motivations and outcomes of education and training, and what exactly those who never participate would like to do.

7.3 Recommendations

Theme 1. Improving motivation and incentives

A major question for future policy should be how to motivate and create incentives for the most disadvantaged groups to participate in adult learning. The review team would like to see the Ministries of

Education and Labour co-operate more closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to provide a co-ordinated approach to education and training, awareness-raising campaigns, information and guidance services and to target some of these services to the specific needs of individual disadvantaged groups.

Statistics Finland could use their experience in the field to carry out career preference surveys focusing on non-learners and try to establish what choices they would make and what they themselves want to do.

A system of weighting might be applied to funding. If a training effort is good for the economy and society at large, *e.g.* if it is supporting the unemployed to return to work or helping groups on the brink of marginalisation, it receives full public funding, but if it is solely for the good of an individual or enterprise then they must be prepared to finance it. There are, of course, many steps between these two poles. Indirect financing through adjusting tax benefits and payments, or levy and loan schemes should be developed, starting with higher education loans.

Adjusting taxes in favour of employers would encourage them to retain and re-employ older workers who have a wealth of experience to be tapped. On the other hand, less state funding and higher private contribution in some vocational programmes could release public budgets for some at risk groups.

A useful mechanism has been created in the training insurance guarantee. This will be applicable to all, regardless of employment status, from 1 August 2001. Now it is necessary to promote it, particularly among the lower skilled, and to remove remaining barriers to its use, such as reducing the number of years in employment necessary to avail of it. To accompany it, measures to motivate non-participants are required, more work-based learning and apprenticeships (already popular among adults in Finland) could prove useful, as well as tailor-made courses and guidance.

Theme 2. Integrated approach to provision and participation

Access to higher education, especially universities, should be opened to a wider public, including adults with work experience, to prepare the modern workforce. A standardised national university exam would probably help a great deal in tackling the problems by enhancing the number of university entrants, getting students to finish their studies more quickly and helping to leave the open university available to those who need it the most. Advanced degrees among graduates should also be encouraged as part of career progression. This cannot be achieved if provision is not made for adequate financing through student loans or learning accounts.

Either a national standardised university exit exam or national competency examinations in general professional and liberal arts fields would provide an alternative to the too-often time-wasting process of thesis writing. The Finnish system of vocational competency-based exams could serve as a model.

All other participants in the workforce must be supported to upgrade their skills to at least upper secondary level. Upper secondary schools for adults exist to make this possible, but attention must be given to arranging it in unison with family and work commitments.

Theme 3. Improving quality, pedagogy and variety of provision

Where things have been done on a micro, rather than global, level results have been positive, *e.g.* integrated adult education in the minority Swedish community, immigrant services provided by the

Ministry for Social Affairs, certain eLearning initiatives, etc. Inspiration should be taken from these successes to progress in the direction of more targeted measures.

Research on education is carried out independently by many universities, some at the request of government ministries. A research institute, publicly funded to carry out and co-ordinate educational research across all ministries and bodies concerned, would have an integrating effect and could improve coherence between the policies of various ministries. It would also have the effect of bringing policy and research closer together, and provide pedagogues, researchers and policy makers at all levels with a platform for communication.

Since Finland has high levels of Internet access in schools and libraries, e-learning should be exploited in full as a way to help isolated areas and fight against regional disparities in access to learning.

Theme 4. Assuring policy coherence and effectiveness

The planning and development of adult education should be situated in the wider setting of economic, social, environmental and health, cultural and labour market polices and structures, to enable it develop as an integral part of lifelong learning, as is done in some of the regional programmes described in Section 6.

Creation of a national body to supervise and evaluate the efforts of the regional authorities would help to ensure a reasonable measure of equality among the regions, in terms of economic and social development. It should have the power to take action to prevent regional disparities and redress existing inequalities and regional divide.

GLOSSARY

AEC	Adult Education Centre
AMK	*Ammatikorkeakoulut* (polytechnic, AMK institute)
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance Guarantee Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FHS	Folk High School
FIFG	Financial Instrument of Fisheries Guidance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IALS	International Adult literacy Survey
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILA	Individual Learning Accounts
NAP	National Action Plan for employment
NBE	National Board of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PC	Personal computer
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SIALS	Second International Adult literacy Survey
TE Centre	Employment and Business Development Centre
VAEC	Vocational Adult Education Centre
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YLE	Finnish Broadcasting Company

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ANNEX 2
OECD Review team

Ms. Martina Ní Cheallaigh (Rapporteur)	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), Thessaloniki, Greece
Mr. Richard P. Phelps	Westat, Education Studies Group, Rockville, United States
Mr. Vincent Vandenberghe	Economics Department, Université catholique de Louvain (UCL), Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Ms. Anne Sonnet	Employment Analysis and Policy Division, Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DEELSA), OECD, Paris, France
Mr. Patrick Werquin	Education and Training Division, Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DEELSA), OECD, Paris, France

ANNEX 3
Programme of the visit

Thursday 1 February — Oslo

8:30 – 9:30 ***Meeting with the writer team of the Background Report***

- Location: Ministry of Education

Mr. Jorma Ahola, Ministry of Education
Ms. Paula Kilpeläinen, The Employers Confederation of Service Industries
Mr. Seppo Larmo, Ministry of Labour
Ms. Riitta Jalonen, The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE
Ms. Taru Rastas, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Ms. Aune Turpeinen, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Mr. Ville Heinonen, Ministry of Education

9:30 - 10:30 ***Evaluation of adult education and training***

- Location: Ministry of Education

The National Board of Education is responsible for the evaluation of primary and secondary level education. The Higher Education Evaluation Council is responsible for the evaluation of tertiary level education.

Mr. Pentti Yrjölä, National Board of Education
Mr. Kauko Hämäläinen, Higher Education Evaluation Council

11:30 - 13:30 ***Adult learning in government policy***

- Location: Ministry of Education

Education policy:
Mr. Markku Linna, Ministry of Education
Ms. Marita Savola, Ministry of Education

Social policy:
Mr. Reijo Väärälä, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Employment policy:
Mr. Heikki Räisänen, Ministry of Labour

Industrial policy:
Mr. Matti Pietarinen, Ministry of Trade and Industry

Also present:
Mr Timo Lähdesmäki, National Board of Education

14.00 - 15:00 ***Adult learning from the point of view of the Parliament***

- Location: Parliament House, room of the Committee for Education and Culture

Ms. Kaarina Dromberg, Chair of the Committee for Education and Culture
Mr. Jukka Gustafsson, The Committee for Education and Culture
Ms. Inkeri Kerola, The Committee for Education and Culture

15:30 - 16:30 ***TV and new media in adult learning***

- Location: Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE

Ms. Riitta Jalonen, YLE
Ms. Ulla Martikainen-Florath, YLE
Ms. Marjaana Kuusinen, YLE

Friday 2 February — Helsinki and Järvenpää

8:30 - 9:30 ***The statistics of adult education and adult learning***

- Location: Statistics Finland, Helsinki

Ms. Riitta Harala, Statistics Finland
Ms. Irja Blomqvist, Statistics Finland
Mr. Hannu Virtanen, Statistics Finland
Ms. Tarja Seppänen, Statistics Finland
Ms. Ritva Kaukonen, Statistics Finland

10:00 - 11:00 ***Adult learning and the municipalities***

- Location: The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki

Municipalities maintain the majority of primary and secondary level educational institutions and polytechnics.

Mr. Antti Virtanen, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
Ms. Veronica Granö-Suomalainen, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
Ms. Marika Yli-Ikkelä, Local Government Training Ltd

13:00 - 16:00 ***Upper secondary and post-secondary level vocational adult education, personalisation of study programmes***

- Location: Adulta Vocational Adult Education Centre, Järvenpää

Adulta's provision covers electrical and mechanical engineering, catering, construction technology, information technology, business and administration, languages, orientational education and media training for the film and television industry. It also covers all the financing categories. Adulta has facilities in Järvenpää, Kerava, Tuusula and Helsinki. Yearly number of students is over 7 000.

Mr. Simo Susiluoto, Adulta
Mr. Erkki Kivi, Adulta
Mr. Veli-Matti Lamppu, Adulta
Ms. Asta Pakarinen, Adulta
Mr. Seppo Telinkangas, Adulta
Mr. Erkki Salmi, National Board of Education
Mr. Timo Lähdesmäki, National Board of Education
Mr. Heikki Sederlöf, Association of Vocational Adult Education Centres
Ms. Marita Aho, Association of Vocational Education Institutes for Industry and Commerce
Ms. Katri Luukka, The Union of Finnish Vocational Principal Associations

Monday 5 February — Helsinki and Hämeenlinna

8:30 -10:30 ***Adult learning in the policy of social partners***

- Location: Ministry of Education, Helsinki

Employee organisations:
Ms. Leila Kurki, The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees
Mr. Heikki Liede, The Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland

Employer organisations:
Mr. Heikki Suomalainen, The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers
Ms. Paula Kilpeläinen, The Employers' Confederation of Service Industries in Finland
Ms. Sinikka Wuolijoki, State Employer's Office, Ministry of Finance

13:30 - 16:00 ***Adult learning in Häme Polytechnic***

- Location: Häme Polytechnic, Hämeenlinna

Häme Polytechnic's fields of education are technology, culture, health care and social services, business and administration, natural resources and vocational teacher education. Polytechnic has facilities in seven municipalities and over 6000 students.

Mr. Veijo Hintsanen, Häme Polytechnic
Ms. Sirkka Hämäläinen, Häme Polytechnic
Mr. Tapani Pöykkö, Häme Polytechnic
Mr. Pertti Puusaari, Häme Polytechnic
Ms. Anja Valta, Häme Polytechnic
Ms. Anita Olkinuora, Häme Polytechnic

Also present:
Mr. Markku Lahtinen, The Rectors Conference of Finnish Polytechnics

Tuesday 6 February — Tampere

8:30 - 11:00 ***Adult learning in the University of Tampere***

- Location: University of Tampere

University of Tampere has faculties of humanities, education, medicine, economics and administration and social sciences. It has 14 000 students.

Mr. Markku Leppäalho, Institute for Extension Studies
Mr. Jorma Taskinen, Institute for Extension Studies
Ms. Kirsi-Marja Varjokorpi, Institute for Extension Studies
Mr. Matti Parjanen, University of Tampere
Ms. Riikka Rahikainen, University of Tampere
Mr. Mikko Markkola, University of Tampere

Also present:
Mr. Tapio Markkanen, Finnish Council of University Rectors
Mr. Juhani Rautiainen, Finnish Council of Centres for University Continuing Education

12:30 - 16:00 ***Activities of Adult Education Centre of Tampere***

- Location: Adult Education Centre of Tampere, Tampere

Liberal adult education is well developed in Tampere. The institutions cover the main activities of liberal adult education.

Mr. Pertti Timonen, Adult Education Centre
Ms. Taina Törmä, Adult Education Centre

Activities of Tampere Upper Secondary School for Adults
Ms. Elise Kääntönen

Activities of Päivölä Folk High School
Mr. Juha Vuorinen

Also present:
Ms. Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius, Finnish Adult Education Association FAEA

Wednesday 7 February — Helsinki

8:30 - 10:00 ***Adult education and training of the Swedish-speaking population***

- Location: Folkhälsan

Activities of the Swedish-speaking upper secondary vocational institute FOCUM

Ms. Helena Taxell, National Board of Education
Mr. Henrik Wolff, Arcada Polytechnic
Ms. Anna Ehrnrooth, FOCUM

10:00 - 11:30 ***Provision for low qualified adults***

- Location: Folkhälsan

Mr. Markku Hiltunen, Siikaranta Folk High School
Ms. Liisa Häkkilä, Siikaranta Folk High School
Provision for immigrants
Ms Ritva Kaikkonen, Amiedu Vocational Adult Education Centre

13:00 - 14:00 ***Activities of Jollas Institute***

- Location: Jollas Institute

Jollas Institute is S-Groups training and education centre. It provides professional training for the employees of the Group's regional co-operative societies working in some 1200 outlets throughout the country. S-Group's activities cover retailing, hotels and restaurants, service stations, car trade and agribusiness.

Mr. Matti Pulkki, Jollas Institute
Mr. Vesa Kyllönen, Jollas Institute
Also present:
Ms. Paula Kilpeläinen, Employers Confederation of Service Industries

14:30 - 16:30 ***Human resource development in Metso Corporation***

- Location: Metso Corporation

Metso is a supplier of processes, machinery and systems for the pulp and paper industry, automation and flow control solutions and rock and mineral processing systems. It employs some 23 000 people.

Mr. Eero Leivo, Metso
Ms. Sirkka-Liisa Virtanen, Valmet
Also present:
Mr. Heikki Suomalainen, Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers

Thursday 8 February — Joensuu

- **Location: Employment and Economic Development Centre for North Karelia**

8:30 - 11:30 ***Adult learning activities of Employment and Economic Development Centre for North Karelia***

Mr. Matti Kuosmanen, Employment and Economic Development Centre
Ms. Hannele Jokiniemi, Employment and Economic Development Centre
Ms. Helena Puhakka, Employment and Economic Development Centre
Mr Erkki Vähärautio, Employment and Economic Development Centre

Guidance and counselling activities
Ms. Merja Koivuluhta, Joensuu Employment Office
Ms. Eija Karvinen, North Karelia Vocational Adult Education Centre

12:30 - 16:00 ***Adult learning in the regional development programmes and adult learning activities in Provincial State Office of Eastern Finland***

Mr. Matti Leskinen, Provincial State Office of Eastern Finland
Ms. Maire Avento, Provincial State Office of Eastern Finland
Mr. Raimo Kalevi, Provincial State Office of Eastern Finland
Ms. Eija Pääkkö, Provincial State Office of Eastern Finland
Ms. Helena Puhakka, North Karelia Employment and Economic Development Centre
Mr. Esko Paakkola, University of Joensuu
Mr. Pentti Jormanainen, Vocational Adult Education Centre in North Karelia
Ms. Satu Krohns, Kaprakka Vocational Training Centre
Ms. Marjatta Karkkulainen, Kitee Learning Centre, Unit for Vocational Education
Ms. Merja Mononen, Kitee Learning Centre, Unit for Education of Agriculture
Ms. Minna Ylhäinen, Kitee Evangelistic Folk High School

Friday 9 February — Helsinki

- Location: Ministry of Education

8:30 - 11:30 ***Meeting with researchers of adult learning***

Ms. Marion Fields, Research Unit for the Sociology of Education, University of Turku
Mr. Jyri Manninen, Research and training centre Palmenia, University of Helsinki
Mr. Pasi Tulkki, Work Research Centre, University of Tampere
Ms. Irja Blomqvist, Statistics Finland
Mr. Asko Suikkanen, University of Lapland

13:00 -14:00 ***Evaluation meeting in the Ministry of Education***

Feedback from the expert team

Ms. Marita Savola, Ministry of Education
Mr. Jorma Ahola, Ministry of Education
Ms. Irja Blomqvist, Statistics Finland
Ms. Paula Kilpeläinen, Employers Confederation of Service Industries
Mr. Seppo Larmo, Ministry of Labour
Ms. Riitta Jalonen, Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE
Ms. Taru Rastas, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Mr. Ville Heinonen, Ministry of Education

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
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